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Psychology – a path to peace?

We seek alternatives to military action against 'extremism'

The British Psychological Society
Promoting excellence in psychology

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The British Psychological Society
Promoting excellence in psychology

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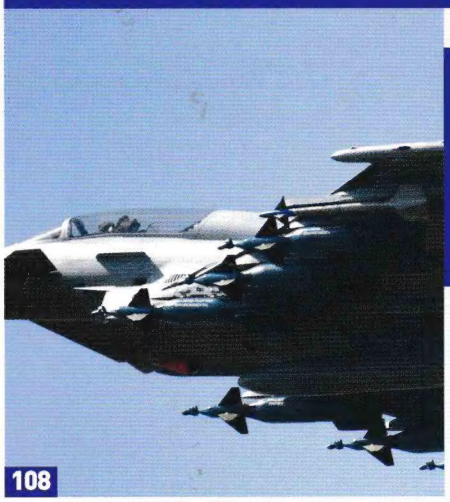

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3 years ago
Go to **www.thepsychologist.org.uk** for our archive, including Robert Sternberg on the stages of his quest to understand what bonds us together

the issue

There's an expectation – from the funding framework, from the public, from psychologists themselves – that our discipline should make a difference. It's all about 'impact'. What can *The Psychologist* do to reflect and facilitate this?

This month, I can point you to two attempts. On p.108, a discussion special considers if we are resigned to remaining quiet as the bombs fall in Syria or elsewhere, or whether psychologists can find a path to peace. On p.120, we hear from John Drury about his work, featured in the Society's 'impact portal' (www.bps.org.uk/impact).

The print/online integration is central to our own quest for 'impact': the discussion special began online and will hopefully continue there. Please do consider writing for us as one path to impact: you can reach more than 50,000 Society members, and a wider audience via our website and social media. It's a great time to contribute: see thepsychologist.bps.org.uk for guidance. And keep an eye out for our app: hopefully due in February! Follow us @psychmag for updates.

Dr Jon Sutton
Managing Editor

Big picture centre-page pull-out
Imagining the future before breakfast: image/words by **Jan Cosgrave** and **Dalena Van Heugten** (University of Oxford)

The reality of life and death decisions

Kitzinger and Wilkinson ('A matter of life and death', December 2015) argue that the use of advanced decisions rather than relying on surrogate decisions ensures that end-of-life care reflects our wishes and values. But painting surrogate decisions as errorful and advanced decisions as relatively error-free does not reflect the reality of human decision-making.

As Kitzinger and Wilkinson point out, surrogate decision-making by next of kin is often inaccurate. Systematic research reveals 69 per cent accuracy in predicting hypothetical medical scenarios (e.g. Shalowitz et al., 2006) and chance level for predicting a partner's end-of-life choices (Suhl et al., 1994). Advance directives, however, are effective neither in improving this accuracy (Ditto et al., 2001) nor in ensuring that patient's wishes are followed in their end-of-life care (Coppola et al., 2001).

Advance decisions or directives are a form of inter-temporal choice, in which we discount the consequences of outcomes in the remote future more than the immediate future. The rate at which we discount future consequences varies systematically across the lifespan, making it highly relevant to advance directives. Older adults discount future consequences much less than younger adults; therefore the earlier in life the directive is made the less likely it is to reflect the wishes of the older person. Perceived closeness to death affects impulsivity in discounting (Kelley & Schmeichel, 2015), but this mortality salience doesn't affect everyone in the same way. Whereas wealthier people become more future-oriented and value time they have left more, less well-off people become more impulsive (Griskevicius et al., 2011). Discount rates are generally steeper in people who are less wealthy, educated or healthy (Reimers et al., 2009). The advance directives of some sections of society might therefore be even less likely to accurately reflect their wishes when the hypothetical becomes reality. Notably in the examples of successful advance directives cited by Kitzinger and Wilkinson, there was little time between the directive being made and its coming into effect; this short temporal frame is likely to be the most successful in making accurate predictions, but is still subject to distortions.

Whilst we intuitively feel an authority on our own values and preferences, research shows that we are not good at predicting our long-term preferences (Loewenstein, 2005b) and consequently, advance directives don't always reflect what we would choose in the reality of the situation (Winter et al., 2010). For example, only 10 per cent of healthy people predict they would undergo chemotherapy as cancer treatment to gain a short increase in life expectancy, but that figure increases to 47 per cent in current cancer patients. This prospective empathy gap is caused when we try to predict our own future preferences in an affective state different from the one we are in; when in acute medical distress we are likely to experience intense fear, anxiety, pain and discomfort, but we make advance decisions about the situation whilst experiencing none of these affective states and are likely to underestimate the influence they will have on motivating any decision we make (Loewenstein, 2005a, 2005b).

Although not immediately apparent, advance decisions might be very similar to surrogate decisions and thus facing the same problems and inaccuracies. Our research into the cognitive processes that people use to make surrogate decisions suggests

Over-optimistic about attachment?

The article by Antigonos Sochos ('Attachment – beyond interpersonal relationships', December 2015) is both interesting and illuminating. The author very aptly emphasises the significance of attachment theory in relation to the child development, adult relationships and mental health.

Attachment theory is an offspring of psychoanalysis, and has been neglected for a long time by the main proponents of Freud and Klein. Fonagy (2001) has attempted to integrate the overlapping areas of attachment theory and psychoanalysis, and is responsible for reawakening interest in Bowlby's work.

Although some of the criticisms of attachment theory are not unfounded, there is evidence that concepts of the theory can be used in making significant predictions regarding relationships, styles of coping with stressful situations, and communication between couples (Brennan & Shaver, 1994). Similarly,

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Letters
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Robert Sternberg, Oklahoma State University

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TIM SANDERS

that people engage in a form of perspective-taking when making decisions on behalf of others (Tunney & Ziegler, 2015b). We tend to make more rational decisions for other people than we make for ourselves, and we discount future consequences less for other people (Ziegler & Tunney, 2012). Two principal reasons for this are the hot–cold empathy gaps (Loewenstein, 2005a, 2005b) and the construal or temporal distance between a decision made about an abstract hypothetical scenario and a concrete situation (Trope & Liberman, 2010).

We think that advance decisions should be treated with caution because the processes used to make an advance decision may be the same as those we use to make surrogate decisions. One of the most common errors in surrogate decision-making is the assumption that other people have preferences that are similar to our own (Marks & Arkes, 2008; Tunney & Ziegler, 2015a), and we are also likely to assume that our future selves are similar to our present self. This assumption is almost certainly wrong (Loewenstein, 2005b; Winter et al., 2010), and may be even more inaccurate than the decision made by our next of kin because our future identities often turn out to be quite different from our younger identity (Parfit, 1984). There are a number of reasons why the decisions that we make on behalf of our future selves might be inaccurate. Personal ethics and values are not fixed. People often become more conservative with age (Truett, 1993), and certainly become less impulsive (Reimers et al., 2009). More importantly those religious values that often are considered important in the refusal of medical treatment are not fixed (McCullough et al., 2005). Of course, religiosity is not the causal variable here and may result from qualitative changes over time in the attribution of personal trust and loyalty towards what Fowler (1991) calls Centres of Value that may include religion but may also include an entirely secular humanism (Fowler, 1991, 2001). Thus a decision to decline treatment that is informed by a religious or personal belief or at one point in time may not be relevant at another point in time as the person's faith and commitment to those values waxes and wanes over the lifespan (McCullough et al., 2009).

The critical assumption of living wills and advance directives is that we can accurately predict our own long-term preferences, but evidence suggests that this is not the case.

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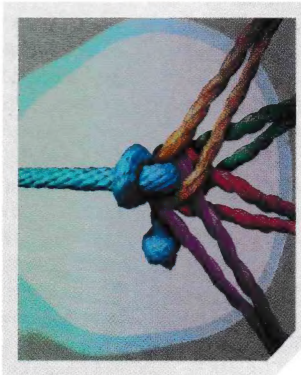
Editor's note: The references list for this letter is available with the online version via https://thepsychologist.bps.org.uk/debates.



Holmes (2000) has suggested that attachment theory can help with clinical listening and identifying, and intervening with different narrative styles in therapy.

However, it is essential that we guard ourselves against becoming over-optimistic about attachment theory. We need to remind ourselves that, although important, Bowlby's observations were based on children who had been separated from their primary caregivers during the Second World War (Lemma, 2003). In other words, attachment theory was based on behaviours that occurred during stressful situations rather than under normal circumstances. Field (1996) has highlighted the limitations of attachment theory and pointed out that a wider and in-depth understanding of attachment requires observation of interactions between mother and infant during natural and non-stressful situations.

It is certainly true that many people may turn to God in difficult times or crisis. However, contrary to what Sophos has written, even when people have secure and strong attachments with other human beings, they are still attached to God.

The points highlighted in Sophos' article are indeed important for discovering the potential of attachment theory in providing links between interpersonal and sociocultural relationships. However, the idea that the quoted research will help us to gain insight into our 'quest for protection and irrefutable certainty', seems to us questionable and perhaps overambitious.

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Does it matter if psychologists are unrepresentative?

We wrote to *The Psychologist* (May 2015) about the demographics of those who apply to our educational psychology (EP) training programme and enter the profession: there is an apparent skew towards white females.

Looking at the responses to our query one major theme emerged, that of female/male stereotyping and early experiences of psychology. Introductions to psychology (particularly A-level) appear to be more likely to attract women than men. Respondents suggested females may opt for choices that can lead to 'caring profession' careers. Other issues of equality and diversity were also mentioned (e.g. race and sexuality), but respondents in the main focused as indicated above.

There were for us three other telling responses: First, from a sole male trainee on an EP training programme, to the effect that male experience and voice may be lost in the training experience where there is a significant gender imbalance in the cohort; second, from a clinical psychologist, that this imbalance seems present in at least one other applied branch of the discipline; and third, one respondent's candid confession that '…how to attract more males to study psychology in the first place is beyond me'.

As scientists we are aware of the need for caution. We have a sense that issues of demographic imbalance may increasingly pervade psychology, but believe this needs further exploration. Consequently, we are asking the British Psychological Society to consider this issue to establish:

- whether our suspicions are grounded in evidence;
- whether or not this possible demographic imbalance is found more widely;
- whether it matters if the members of a profession are unrepresentative of the population it seeks to serve;
- the extent to which this is of concern to them; and as a consequence
- whether and what actions may be necessary in response.

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Simon Gibbs
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Richard Parker
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Editor's note: We have sought a response to this letter, which we hope to publish in the next issue.

Conversing about antibiotics

It is good news that the ESRC's new Antimicrobial Resistance Champion has highlighted the importance of social scientific research in combating the rise of antibiotic misuse ('Tackling the antibiotics problem', December 2015), and I was pleased to see that the British Psychological Society's Division of Health Psychology is stepping up to the mark.

Another piece of the jigsaw is provided by analysing doctor–patient interaction. Systematic, detailed analysis of recorded consultations can expose how patients can put covert pressure on doctors to prescribe antibiotics and how doctors either succumb, or resist. The findings of conversation analysis have been used to provide doctors with strategies for managing patient pressure for antibiotics.

In a study of video-recorded paediatric encounters, Tanya Stivers (2007) shows that when parents bring children to the doctor and provide 'symptom-only problem presentations' (e.g. 'He has a runny nose and a sore throat'), doctors are less likely to provide antibiotics compared with 'candidate diagnosis problem presentations' (e.g. 'He has a terrible sore throat so I thought maybe it was strep').

One way in which doctors can manage patient pressure for antibiotics is via 'online commentary' (Heritage & Stivers, 1999). As doctors conduct a physical examination of the patient, they can simultaneously describe what they are seeing and evaluate its diagnostic significance. In one of their examples, a patient who has already received an antibiotic treatment (augmentin) is back for another appointment, complaining about continuing symptoms. The online commentary (p.1509) runs like this (transcription simplified):

> **Doctor:** Well, let's check your sinuses and see how they look today. (pause) That looks a lot better. I don't see any inflammation today. (pause) Good. That's done the trick. (pause) So you should be just about over it. I don't – I'm not really convinced you have an ongoing infection. It seems like the augmentin really kicked it.
> **Patient:** Good.

In this case, and in all other instances in their data, doctors' use of online commentary resulted in the absence of patient resistance to the subsequent diagnosis of (comparative) wellness. By overcoming patients' resistance to a 'no problem' finding, doctors also succeed in avoiding complying with patients' expectations that they will prescribe medication for whatever it is that patients think is wrong with them. Online commentary, according to Heritage and Stivers may be 'a simple but powerful communication resource with which physicians can resist implicit or explicit patient pressure for antibiotic medication' (p.1516).

This is just one example of the way in which micro-analysis of conversation can help to solve a large-scale public health problem. Conversation analysis can be an invaluable tool in the field of healthcare communication – and other applied domains.

If you are intrigued, why not sign up via the British Psychological Society's Learning Centre for a new one-day introductory course ('Conversation Analysis') in London, and/or join us in York for one or more of the new short courses we will be running in 2016 (see http://uoysociology.blogspot.co.uk/2015/12/conversation-analysis-short-courses-how.html).

Professor Sue Wilkinson
University of York

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Morals and harm

Schein et al. ('The uncensored truth about morality', December 2015) claim too much in presenting their theory of dyadic morality as universally applicable. They argue that intentional harm inflicted by one person on another 'is the very core of a universal moral template', but fail to demonstrate this. Indeed, one of their early examples serves only to illustrate the limitations of the theory. This is the statement that 'debates about abortion hinge on whether fetuses are capable of feeling pain…'. This is simply untrue: abortion debates are overwhelmingly disagreements on matters of principle, not reducible to harm or not harm: the rights of the woman versus those of the foetus, the question when a foetus becomes a person, and the sanctity of human life. Then, in attempting to show that the theory applies across cultures, they argue that a particular Hindu dietary rule can be reduced to preventing harm to a relative. Perhaps so, but that does not show that all rules concerning spiritual purity can be similarly reduced.

They criticise the theory of Haidt (2012), who shows how, across the American political spectrum, people differ in their attachments to five moral dimensions or modules: care, fairness, loyalty, authority and sanctity. Schein et al. describe evidence that judgements about harm underpin all of these, thus supporting their claim that the dyadic theory is all that is needed. However, even if harm can be shown to be the sole basis for Americans' moral judgements (which is unlikely, given the abortion example, for instance), this does not demonstrate the universal applicability of dyadic morality.

Americans on both the political left and right inhabit the culture of Western liberalism, within which the individual person has ultimate moral worth and in which the values of freedom, equality and tolerance are assumed. Hence the moral importance of harm to the individual. Siedentop (2014) traces the roots and spread of this culture. The point here is that these assumptions are not shared by most of the world's population. For most people, ultimate moral worth is accorded to deities, nations, or spiritual or national leaders. Similarly, the Western assumption of equality between the sexes and between people of different social ranks is clearly not accepted universally. Fukuyama (1992) foresaw the end of history, with Western liberal capitalist democracy about to become the global norm. How wrong he turned out to be. The aim of Schein et al. – to produce a universally applicable account of moral reasoning – is hugely important, but remains to be achieved.

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PRESIDENT'S LETTER

My 'Presidential theme' for this month is that of relationships, so I am pleased to see the article by Karen Fingerman on parent–child ties.

Relationships are key to most, if not all, of us working as, or studying to be, psychologists – with the people we work with or serve (amongst them those whom some describe as patients or clients), with our peers, with our teachers and mentors, with the organisations that we work in or alongside. Outside our lives as psychologists, our relationships with our partners, families and friends are of course central to our lives.

And relationships are key for the British Psychological Society too. Over the past year we have worked very hard to form or maintain relationships with National Assemblies and Parliaments, with Government Departments, and with our Commissioners and Regulators. We've also strengthened our relationships with a number of national organisations and professional associations and have worked closely with them on a number of national campaigns and initiatives, such as the Mental Health Taskforce, and through letters to the press. It had been my hope for my presidency that we should be present, visible, vocal and impactful – and, to my great delight, we have been!

On an international basis, we have been active members of the European Federation of Psychology Associations (EFPA) and the International Union of Psychological Science (IUPsyS) and have signed Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with one of the first psychological societies, the RPS (Russian Psychological Society), and with one of the newest, the PSI (Psychological Society of Ireland. We're also poised to enter similar agreements with the psychological societies of Iceland, New Zealand and Sweden later this year.

What about within our Society? What are our relationships like here? There are two main definitions of the word 'society'. One is that of an organisation or club formed for a particular purpose or activity – and we are certainly that, and our Royal Charter, Rules and Statutes set out the detail. But the other talks about a group of people who are engaged in persistent social interaction – and we are certainly not that any more, at least not across the whole Society. When there were only 12 people in the Society in 1901 then that might have been much simpler to attain but now that there are nearly 55,000 of us it is much less so. We have become siloed into Divisions (which divide) and Sections (which cut one group off from another). Only in Branches, I would contest, is the 'society' function of our Society readily visible.

Hence the Structural Review, due to be signed off by Trustees in March, the aims of which are to create a democratic, proportionally representative, decision making, policy making structure and to encourage much greater coworking, cooperation and collaboration between and across our Divisions and Sections. This, together with the reordering of the form and function of our Trustee body, will be the greatest change that our Society has ever seen and could also allow Divisions and others to group together into Colleges for the purpose of bringing greater collective strength, backed by the power and authority of the Society, for certain outward facing functions.

Which sort of society do you think that ours should be? I believe that we can become both.

Jamie Hacker Hughes is President of the British Psychological Society. Contact him at PresidentsOffice@bps.org.uk or follow on Twitter: @profjamiehh.

Keep looking for biological causes

I wonder if a group exists within our profession, increasingly uncompromising in its opposition to possible biological bases of 'functional' mental health difficulties, that would advocate the abandonment of broad-based research into such factors.

I also wonder if the view would be shared by the proportion of young people who become severely unwell and go on to receive diagnoses of schizophrenia but who actually have a form of autoimmune encephalitis, an inflammatory illness of the brain, treatable with immunotherapy (Lennox et al., 2012). It is now thought that perhaps 5 to 10 per cent of cases of first episode psychosis may be caused by antibodies identifiable by current methods (Zandi et al., 2011) (encephalitis has historically been recognised as classically neurological: headaches, seizures, cognitive and language disturbance, even coma and death).

For the benefit of our patients/clients, and for professional credibility, it is important to be tolerant of the potentially diverse origins of future advances in mental health care.

Patrick Vesey
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Storm Desmond and social capital

Scrolling through Facebook on Saturday 5 and Sunday 6 December 2015 my newsfeed was full of posts such as 'I can't quite believe it's happening again' and 'oh not again…stay safe'. These were in response to Storm Desmond, which resulted in 4881 homes in Cumbria being flooded and 6455 being affected, and my thoughts immediately went back to the floods of 2009.

Living in West Cumbria at the time of the 2009 November floods and West Cumbria shootings in 2010, I observed that the community appeared to respond remarkably to these shared traumas. Whilst studying my Master's in Psychological Research Methods at Lancaster University I chose to focus my dissertation on this issue. Through semi-structured interviews with those affected, evidence of community resilience as defined by Hawkins and Maurer (2010) was reported (through utilising bonding, bridging and linking social capital). Examples of bonding emerged in relation to the immediate response to the floods; for example, offering neighbours accommodation immediately. The response to the floods presented examples of bridging through different communities (e.g. neighbouring pubs supporting one another in clearing out flooded cellars), and the way in which different elements of a community linked was also notable (e.g. a local housing association working with Age UK to ensure that older people were receiving the information and care they needed). However, there were fewer examples of linking social capital, and these were mainly top-down activities.

Following Storm Desmond, it has been interesting to reflect on how the community is responding, particularly in how social media is being used. In the 2009 floods I recall people sharing their thoughts and photos, but this time people are utilising social media to harness their community resources. On Saturday several Facebook groups were created as an information source, which was keeping people up-to-date with the flood defence levels, and later with what roads were closed. People who were stranded outside West Cumbria were posting in these groups, and strangers were opening their homes for people to seek shelter. There are now several groups organising support for those affected, coordinating the collection and distribution of physical resources. Along with bonding and bridging capital, the responses of Storm Desmond provided examples of linking social capital, in the form of social media groups, where individuals from a range of backgrounds were mobilised to support those affected.

The above provide examples of key developments in the way social platforms such as Facebook and Twitter have helped people join together in the face of adversity, galvanising strength and utilising resources, both in and beyond the community. As the community embarks on the clean-up following the floods, it would be useful to consider how social media might provide opportunities for linking social capital, to promote optimal response, and as the response to Storm Desmond provided opportunities to coordinate rescue efforts through social media, how these platforms could be used to support longer-term recovery work.

Suzanne Day
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Reference

Hawkins, R.L. & Maurer, K. (2010). Bonding, bridging and linking: How social capital operated in New Orleans following Hurricane Katrina. *British Journal of Social Work, 40*, 1777–1793.

Loose talk of gender differences

How very disappointing and ironic. A piece entitled 'Opening doors for girls in science' (December 2015) started so positively, rightly citing the Institute of Physics' suggestion that schools avoid sexist language and culture. I can only applaud this as a lone female physics A-level student in the 1980s, whose male teacher started every lesson with a leering 'Good afternoon gentlemen – and lady!'.

Yet then, disastrously, your article (and apparently the Institute of Physics report's launch event) simply propagated common gender myths and misunderstandings. For instance, as experts such as Cordelia Fine (*Delusions of Gender*) and Janet Shibley Hyde (*The Gender Similarities Hypothesis*) have pointed out, the quoted 'gap in female spatial abilities' (like similar 'gaps' in male language aptitudes) is actually a near-complete overlap of two normal curves. Even in mental rotation, where differences are largest, almost half of all females perform better than the average male. When using more complex real-world spatial problems, rather than bizarre geometric figures, the differences tend to disappear altogether.

Similarly in neuroscience, the wannabe 'hard-wired' believers' desperate fishing for minor anatomical differences is frankly comical, set beside the general variability in those structures. Again, the main picture is of overwhelming gender similarity. Yet the public, understandably, can't know that we are not putting boys and girls in entirely separate brain/aptitude boxes, when they hear loose talk of a 'gap'.

This matters, a lot. All the while that our two disciplines over-dramatise these often pathetically small effect sizes, how can we expect the many girls with above-average potential in science and maths (or boys similarly talented in humanities or languages) to already possess more statistical literacy than many PhD-qualified psychologists, and challenge the stereotypes they read? How much potential scientific talent gets wasted through this misrepresentation of science itself?

Dr Clare Davies
University of Winchester

Genome common sense?

My first reaction to Oliver James's letter ('Not in your genes', December 2015) was to think 'Oh. No. Not again'... and to dismiss the thought of making yet another attempt to instil some common sense into the nature–nurture 'debate'. But there are two good reasons for not letting it pass.

The first is that James's extreme 'nurture' position leads to policies that are every bit as dangerous and Draconian, even fascist, as the misuse of the hereditarian data. For example, the Scottish Government is in the process of introducing the Children and Young People (Scotland) Bill. Justified on the basis of offering every family a 'first point of contact' with the plethora of 'care' agencies nominally available to 'help' families and children, this Bill actually provides for extraordinary state intervention into the lives of every child and family. A state servant appointed to ensure a child's 'well-being' will have access to all family health, criminality, and educational records. They will visit the family for hour-and-a-half long assessments 11 times, eight of them in the child's first year to monitor not only the health and development of the baby, but also a range of aspects of parental attitudes and family life, including finances and mental health. The assessments include two sets of tightly-printed 16-page questionnaires, permeated by 'middle-class' biases and values, unquestioningly endorsing the doubtful benefits for all children of the so-called 'educational' system, and accepting the misleading popularised interpretations of the (actually meagre and mostly seriously flawed) research into the 'importance of the first three years'. The 'named person' will have the right to initiate procedures to compel parents to attend parent-'education' courses and, in the last resort, have them sent them to prison for failing to follow state-prescribed guidelines.

Unfortunately, we, as psychologists, must accept some responsibility for this disturbing development because, by and large, we have not promoted awareness of the detrimental effects that our current 'educational' system has on many children or research into the multiple talents or the nature of the developmental environments required to nurture them. This is partly because they have accepted one or other of the positions in this polarised debate about 'ability' (AKA 'intelligence') and environment. These positions have become embedded in successive swings of 'educational' policy. But it is mainly because – and here is my second point – psychologists have, without much protest, accepted current funding arrangements that, by-and-large, corrupt 'evidence-based policy' into 'policy-based evidence'. Furthermore, the seemingly ultra-scientific stance of the genome research project has syphoned off virtually all the research funds and it is nigh impossible to obtain funding for research that challenges the dominant zeitgeist and, particularly, the current 'measurement' paradigm, especially the 'g and not much else' image of human abilities.

We ought to be conducting research using a more descriptive, biology-and-ecology-like framework to document the range of human talents, abilities, and other characteristics and their complex interactions with their ecological settings. Grow the seeds from a number of strains of wheat in different environments, and those that are tallest in one environment may not be the tallest in another. The correlations between height, yield, and other characteristics all change. What is 'best' in one environment is not 'best' in another... but the differences between them are still genetically determined.

Without better frameworks for thinking about the diversity of human characteristics and the environments in which they develop, the dominant hopes and expectations of the genome project are indeed dangerous. Yet the funds needed to develop such frameworks – so urgently needed in schools – have in part been swallowed by the vast, seemingly unarguably 'scientific', genome project.

Now here's a thought: What are the genetic and environmental bases of the variance in scores on (improved versions of) the 'f' (fascism) scale? What lies behind 'totalitarianism', 'fundamentalism', and the tendency to criminalise all behaviours which are currently regarded as objectionable?

John Raven
Edinburgh

Editor's note: The debate between Oliver James and Stuart Ritchie (January 2016) continued online, with additional contributions from Richard Bentall. Read it at tinyurl.com/jamesritchie

Discipline in schools

I am writing in response to the letter titled 'Negative effects of reward systems in classrooms' (December 2015). I read with interest the concept of a sad list being used in the classroom for primary school age children. Before I studied psychology I taught in a primary school for four years. The disciplinary system that ran through the school was that if a child misbehaved their name was written on the board, if their name appeared on the board three times they received a negative consequence.

As a new teacher I was appalled by the idea of shaming a child in public, and I refused to comply with this system; instead I would write the child's name in my own book making sure the 'naughty' child knew what I was doing, I then followed the same disciplinary procedure. I was rewarded with six months of havoc in my classroom. In despair I started writing the 'naughty' children's name on the board and, wonders of wonders, the children started to comply and behave.

Unfortunately my nine-year-old students had been conditioned from a young age to modify their behaviour when they saw their name on the board. However, if a more discreet method had been used to control the children's behaviour from the beginning, I believe that my students would still have responded. I actually found that having a private list of my student's names in a book and putting a tick beside their name every time they behaved well, and rewarding them with weekly treats, pushed my students to act in lots of positive ways. Such as helping out their classmates, being respectful to the teacher, and following classroom instructions. Hence I don't see why similar methods could not be used for negative behaviour, thus preserving the child's dignity in the classroom.

I wholeheartedly agree with the writer that often the children who repeatedly end up on the sad list, or on the board, are often the children who need the most help and encouragement. Hence they need to feel that they are worthy persons, rather than feeling that they are once again the bad one by seeing their name glaring at them through out the school day. Negativity is cyclical, and often once children feel that they are naughty, which they could easily interpret as bad, they will continue to act up, hence getting themselves into trouble at school and then at home, which repeated year after year can ultimately affect a child's wellbeing.

I believe that as teachers cannot control what happens to children whilst they are at home, utmost care should be taken to make schools a safe haven, and we should sensitively encourage children to behave. Private disciplinary charts could be used when necessary, a joint classroom reward system, or a good old-fashioned talk with a child/children explaining to them the repercussions of their behaviour (which should be conducted in a way that builds the student rather than breaks them). From my own experience I have found that children really grasp ethical and moral concepts, and all they really want to do is please their teacher and act appropriately. It is the teacher's job to uncover that potential.

Let us remember, as teachers, to treat our students as we would like to be treated. None of us would want our names written on a sad list that's taped to the staff room wall every time we made a mistake!

Esther Ebbing
Community Mental Health Advocate – City and Hackney Mind

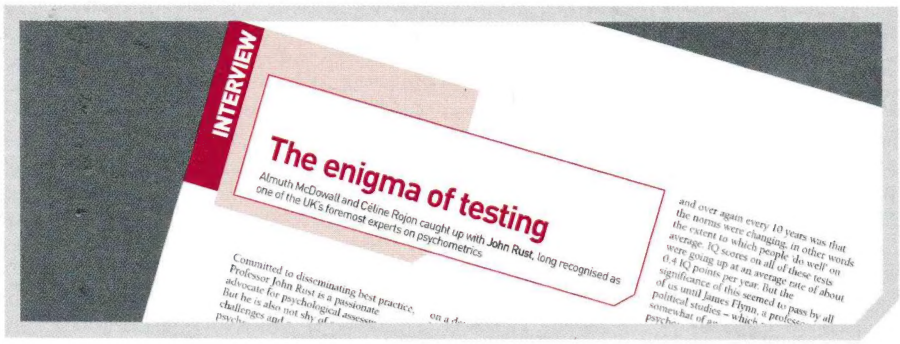
Testing times

I was very interested to read the John Rust interview by Almuth McDowall and Céline Rojon, with its focus on psychometrics.

Readers might be interested to know that the BPS's Psychological Testing Centre (PTC) provides a wide range of resources on psychometric and psychological testing, including nationally recognised qualifications in test use and independent reviews of psychological tests. In addition, the PTC website, www.psychtesting.org.uk contains a great deal of information about testing and test use, including numerous guidelines.

The work of the Psychological Testing Centre is driven by the BPS Committee on Test Standards, whose role is to set, promote and maintain standards in testing, leading initiatives to promote high technical standards in the design and development of tests and their use by psychologists and non-psychologists.

The BPS qualifications in test use are currently available in occupational, educational and forensic contexts, and are designed for professionals who use psychometric or psychological tests as part of their role. The qualifications are recognised by employers throughout the UK, and increasingly internationally.


INTERVIEW

The enigma of testing

Almuth McDowall and Céline Rojon caught up with John Rust, long recognised as one of the UK's foremost experts on psychometrics.

The BPS test review and registration process helps test users identify a psychological test suitable for their needs. Over 150 tests have been reviewed by our Test Reviews editorial team, who are all BPS Chartered Psychologists and experts in the field of testing and test use. Full reviews of tests are available for free to BPS members.

If you would like more information about any of the above, please visit the Psychological Testing Centre website at www.psychtesting.org.uk.

Martin Fisher
Chair of the Committee on Test Standards

What a pity that John Rust's interviewers 'The enigma of testing' (January 2016) did not ask any probing questions about cultural and other potential biases in psychometric testing. A real enigma about testing is why and how it is asserted to be one of the most important fields of applied psychology when it says nothing about the real needs of society, those who currently inhabit and will inhabit the world. Instead it is too often used to categorise (and, maybe thereby stigmatise) people – especially young people. In the face of endemic inter- and intra-national strife something else is required.

Dr Simon Gibbs
University of Newcastle

What about the 'other mother'?

I was delighted to see that the January 2016 issue of *The Psychologist* was a fertility special, as my partner and I are hoping to start our own family through fertility treatment. I am interested in the psychology of this and was excited to read the contemporary views of colleagues. I was particularly pleased to see a helpful 'bitesize' guide included ('The Psychologist guide to… you and your baby'), so valuable in this day and age when time is at a premium.

I found the article 'Reproductive health matters' thought-provoking, particularly the phrase 'a new kind of biopower is… in the hands of sufficiently wealthy…lesbian…women…who can afford it'. I agree there is a financial element to many lesbian couples accessing fertility treatment; however, I think it's important for readers to know that there exists an unfair 'postcode lottery' on fertility treatment for lesbian couples (in addition to 'non-white couples' as stated on in the article), with some lesbian couples able to access fertility treatment on the NHS. The notion of 'power' is also likely far from the minds of lesbian couples going through the experience; fertility treatment can be a stressful journey, rendering couples 'powerless' rather than having 'biopower in their hands' as so eloquently but simplistically reported in the article.

Distressingly, there remains a lack of awareness of issues facing lesbian couples amongst the very centres claiming to provide equal treatment, even in a metropolitan city. For example, in an uncomfortable mandatory pre-treatment session with our 'fertility counsellor' we became aware, through her use of heteronormal language and inappropriate jokes, that the 'other mother' is not considered equal in status to a father, or even to the donor! This, of course, is the type of experience that prompts action to support change, inspired by friends who recently took responsibility for sensitively educating the leaders of their antenatal class regarding marginalising comments. I understand the world is still catching up to the reality that lesbian couples exist *and* are starting families of their own. However, I felt deeply unsettled by point 4 in the 'guide'; 'Dads matter too'. I don't dispute this; in families with dads, it is important for them to be as involved as possible. But what about families without dads? Particularly lesbian families; does the 'other mother' not matter too? Women can also 'encourage their children to run, climb and jump'! A penis is not a prerequisite for this, unless there is some research I have missed.

In 'The other mother: An exploration of non-biological lesbian mothers' unique parenting experience', Paldron (2014) describes the 'other mother' as: 'the connection of being one of two mothers, but as the non-biological parent of the child…in a position where she potentially faces another type of invisibility within an already marginalized population'. This is sadly evident in the world of fertility treatment, but I expected better representation for the LGBTQ community in *The Psychologist* and hope to see more inclusive language in future articles.

Psychology is about celebrating individual differences and is a field in which sexuality is neither a taboo nor dated subject. Equality is about equal access to opportunities, which involves recognising and respecting differences rather than assuming everyone is the same, or some people less important than others. The 'other mother' matters too. I look forward to hopefully attending one of the seminars you advertised in 'Beyond the nuclear family' and sharing what I learn with others. Education is key to overcoming prejudice and inequality. Let's all model this.

Dawn Thorley
Trainee Educational Psychologist, University of Exeter, Dorset County Council

Reference

Paldron, M.F. (2014). *The other mother: An exploration of non-biological lesbian mothers' unique parenting experience*. University of Minnesota doctoral dissertation. Retrieved from the University of Minnesota Digital Conservancy. Available at http://hdl.handle.net/11299/167423

Editor's note: I take your point, although we did try to include tips general to the parent–infant interaction, rather than to any specific family make-up.

Incidentally, we have had considerable interest in the guide since publication – please help us share the online version (tinyurl.com/psychguide1) far and wide.

Applying research

As a highly practical and pragmatic person, I get frustrated daily by the research/practice gap. It was refreshing therefore to read a number of articles in January's edition of *The Psychologist* showing the world's best psychologists doing everything they can to bridge this gap.

First I read Eiko I. Fried's 'Depression – more than the sum of its symptoms'. His argument is so elegant, it seems almost ridiculous in hindsight that such homogeneity has been presumed when studying depression. Work such as his and his colleagues' gives me great hope that the next decade of research will lead to breakthroughs for sufferers of this most debilitating of afflictions.

Then I read the summary of practical advice from psychologists around the world to the US government as reported in 'Memo to the President…'. Today's problems aren't going to be solved with simple interventions, and I hope that governments across the world will read and consider carefully the vast psychological knowledge encapsulated in the advice on topics as broad and vital as obesity and education.

The final article I read however reminded me how far we still have to go in applying psychology practically in parenting and education. Kitrina Douglas shares a heartwarming story of her father clearly making her feel valued for herself, rather than her achievements. As a parent, I do my best to encourage my daughters to enjoy learning for its own sake, and reward effort and enthusiasm, not grades (Carol Dweck would be proud of me), but I fear that this approach is not typical. The constant changes in the UK education system and the seemingly endless focus on frequent measurement seem to suggest that the system is doing quite the opposite. I just hope we don't lose too many of our excellent, but exhausted and disheartened teachers before someone in power finally realises that they are trying to achieve the noble aim of supporting learning for all, in almost entirely the wrong way.

Aime Armstrong
Mum, HR manager and part-time PhD student (De Montfort University)

obituary

Peter Pumfrey (1928–2015)

Professor Peter Pumfrey, Formerly Dean of the Faculty of Education at the University of Manchester, died on 14 December 2015, aged 87. Peter was a Fellow of the British Psychological Society and a member of the Council of Dyslexia Action (The Dyslexia Institute) and a Vice-President of the British Dyslexia Association. He was also an active member of the BPS and served on the DECP committee for several years in the1980s.

Peter's wide-ranging research and teaching interests included the nature, identification and alleviation of developmental dyslexia, attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder and the education of 'looked-after' children. However, psychologists, teachers and related professionals will probably remember him chiefly for his outstanding contribution to the field of specific learning difficulties/dyslexia, an area in which he was a prolific author with over 91 papers in peer-reviewed and professional journals and 31 single or co-authored books. His most influential and widely read book, co-authored with Dr Rea Reason, entitled *Specific Learning Difficulties (Dyslexia): Challenges and Responses* published in 1991 by NFER-Nelson, was a key text for students all over the world for many years.

Peter had a razor-sharp mind coupled with meticulous attention to detail, and this, together with the nature of his penetrating questions, kept all his students and colleagues on their toes. Indeed, in the early stages of their studies, many of his students felt in awe of him. But gradually they began to appreciate his concern for their welfare, his commitment to providing high-quality teaching and the hours of support that he willingly gave to helping them through their programme. As a colleague at the University of Manchester and a member of the DECP committee, I also appreciated his commitment to maintaining the highest standards of teaching and research and the support he willingly provided to us all.

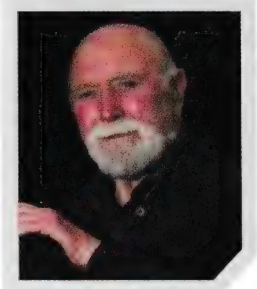
Two other aspects of Peter's life will, I am sure, be remembered by his friends, former students and colleagues. The first was his insatiable desire for hard work. He was normally the first to arrive at the university in the morning and the last to leave, and it was not uncommon for him to book appointments as early as 8am or as late as 7.30pm. More often than not he would come into the university at weekends and rumour has it that he also there one Boxing Day! The second was the unbelievably untidy state of his office. Several times when I knocked on his door I would receive a brief response 'Come' and, on opening the door, I was confronted by mounds and mounds of papers and files – indeed that was all I could see! However, if I stood on tiptoe, I could just about make out Peter's thinning grey hair peeping up between two mounds of box files. I would then carefully negotiate my way around the debris to find him sat at his desk in the far corner of his office.

After retiring from Manchester University Peter moved to Worcestershire when he became Honorary and Visiting Professor at the University of Worcester Institute of Education Centre for Education and Inclusion, where he continued to pursue his academic and research interests.

Peter Farrell
Professor Emeritus in Educational Psychology
Manchester Institute of Education

obituary

Derek William Forrest (1926–2015)



It is with great sadness that we learned that Derek Forrest, former Professor of Psychology at Trinity College Dublin, died following a stroke in September 2015, at the age of 89. He is survived by his wife, Pam, and daughter, Tansy.

Derek Forrest was born in Liverpool, the son of a cotton salesman. From his earliest years Derek stood out from the crowd: he attended Birkenhead School on the Wirral, where he became head boy. He went from school up to Cambridge University, where he started a degree in German, but he was called up for naval service before it was complete. In the Royal Navy he spent time on *HMS Implacable*, and worked in radar. Following his naval service, Derek returned to his academic studies and took a degree in Psychology, Philosophy, and Physiology (PPP) at Keble College, Oxford. Always a good athlete, he represented Oxford University in both swimming and athletics. After graduating from Oxford he worked at the Aircraft Research Laboratory in Farnborough for a year, before being appointed lecturer at Bedford College, London, where he subsequently obtained his PhD, before coming to Trinity College Dublin. His academic interests were broad and eclectic; he had a detailed knowledge of psychoanalysis and an abiding interest in important figures and events in the history of psychology. He is probably best known for his books *Francis Galton: The Life and Work of a Victorian Genius* (1974), and *The Evolution of Hypnotism* (1999), though he also wrote Defy Your Age (2008) for a more general audience. Regrettably he was unable to complete his book on the Tichborne affair (the longest running court case in Victorian England) before he died. He was a Fellow of Trinity College Dublin, the Psychological Society of Ireland, the British Psychological Society and the Royal College of Psychiatrists.

obituary

Lynn Myers (1954–2015)

Derek Forrest founded the Psychology Department at Trinity singlehandedly. Initially he was appointed in 1962 as a Reader in Psychology in the School of Mental and Moral Science. Within a short time he was given responsibility for developing a Psychology Department of his own and by 1965 the first students were admitted to an honours degree programme in which it was possible to take psychology as a major subject in a conjoint course with philosophy. He was appointed as the first Professor of Psychology at Trinity College Dublin in 1968. At first in his department he had only two lecturers working with him to offer not only the honours course but also to provide additional teaching in general studies and social studies. Subsequently Derek guided the migration of the department through the Faculty of Natural Science into the Faculty of Arts (Humanities), where it was able to offer a single honour degree in psychology. Under Derek's headship the department started to train clinical psychologists at postgraduate level and he also developed proposals for the training of counselling psychologists – initiatives which eventually led to the current doctoral courses offered by the School of Psychology in those two disciplines. Derek's public talks and demonstrations of hypnosis were hugely popular, and he also pioneered the offering of an evening course for the public, an initiative which has gone on to be a very popular and successful annual event.

The world was a very different place from today when Derek was first appointed to Trinity College Dublin. The profession of clinical psychology barely existed in Ireland. The original department was established in a fairly dilapidated terraced house in Westland Row, and Derek and his wife, Pam, decorated some of the offices themselves. Funds for running the department were very limited; the departmental budget was so tight that even phone calls were regarded as a luxury. Sophisticated equipment was almost unobtainable, and that needed for research and teaching was made in-house by the very able technicians. In those early days research funding was very scarce, but Derek obtained a significant research grant in the late 1960s that allowed the appointment of a new staff member.

Derek presided over a department that was happy and stimulating for both staff and students. He was in some ways quite a shy person, but to those whom he knew well he was the most charming and engaging companion. He encouraged his colleagues to follow their own interests and was also inspirational in his questioning and the generation of provocative ideas. His easy-going style and interesting lectures and tutorials were very popular with students, and fellow members of staff delighted in his company. They would head towards the staff room at coffee and lunch time attracted by his big booming laugh. Over lunch or coffee, he would typically introduce some controversial topic which would lead to animated discussion all round. Staff would come in to the department on weekends, not because they were overwhelmed with work but because the whole experience was such a pleasure.

He was a charismatic figure who cannot possibly be adequately described in a few short paragraphs. Derek Forrest represented the essence of an academic of his time. Although he retired in 1996, he is still remembered with great affection by those who were members of his department.

Howard Smith
Trinity College Dublin

Health psychology has lost a bright and imaginative personality in Professor Lynn Myers. Lynn died peacefully at the Lister Hospital at the age of 61 after battling valiantly for the past 40 years of her life with a rare neurological condition called chronic inflammatory demyelinating polyneuropathy (CIDP), which caused her to lose her mobility gradually over the years.

Lynn started her career as a pharmacist but pursued her interest in psychology because this entailed a better balance between physical and non-physical duties. As a mature student, she began her psychology career with a first class BSc honours degree at Hatfield Polytechnic and an impressive PhD with no corrections from the Institute of Psychiatry. Lynn held posts at Reading University, Royal Holloway, UCL and then Brunel University. Just two of her notable contributions to students reading health psychology were creating the highly respected MSc in Health Psychology (UCL) and the eminently popular MSc in Psychology, Health & Behaviour (Brunel University).

Despite her chronic illness, Lynn rose to the rank of Professor and was an international expert in the field of the repressive coping style. She published extensively in the field of health psychology and will still be present in many studies as a posthumous author.

Owing to her neurological condition, Lynn was in constant pain over the past 40 years, but never let this stop her living her life to the fullest. She persevered with her career and personal life, demonstrating outstanding resilience. Lynn was a strong character and displayed a fighting spirit when needed. A stout supporter of her students, she always encouraged them to develop their skills and own resilience, both professionally and personally. Lynn worked with an open door policy and was always welcoming – she would always raise her arms in the air and exclaim your name as you would walk through the door.

Lynn was a very well-liked Head of Department at Brunel University. She encouraged her colleagues to reach their potential and additionally helped them to achieve a healthier work–life balance. Whether it was a student or colleague, Lynn would always defend the underdog and speak for those who could not speak up for themselves. Lynn would reassure students even when she was in hospital and was the one really in need of support.

Lynn was always smiling and loved vibrant hues and would often dye her hair in different colours and wear multicoloured nail varnish. She was an avid science fiction fan and a self-confessed Trekkie and would devour sci-fi novels on her Kindle. With her husband Mark, Lynn also loved travelling to different countries and closer to home, she loved to visit Brighton. A passionate fan of live music, Lynn frequented concerts and festivals. She also sang in a rock choir.

I once asked Lynn what was the biggest lesson she had learnt from the difficulties in her life. After a pensive pause, she replied 'to be true to yourself'. That is something we should all remember: to be true to ourselves.

Dr Parminder S. K. Dhiman
Brunel University

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Three new dames and an OBE on New Year list

Three leading psychologists have been awarded damehoods and one an OBE in the New Year Honours list. They have been recognised for work in cancer services, public health, clinical psychology and for helping those living with an altered appearance.

Professor Dame Lesley Fallowfield, Director of Sussex Health Outcomes Research & Education in Cancer (SHORE-C) (University of Sussex), the professor of psycho-oncology to be awarded a damehood, expressed her delight and surprise at the honour. She told *The Psychologist*: 'It is personally satisfying but more importantly a worthy and fitting tribute to all the amazing patients with cancer who have contributed to the research done by my team SHORE-C at Brighton and Sussex Medical School. I have no idea who were the generous people who felt motivated to nominate me, but I'd like to thank them and the doctors and nurses I've been privileged to work with over the years.'

Professor Dame Lesley Fallowfield

Til Wykes, Vice Dean of Psychology and Systems Services and Professor of Clinical Psychology and Rehabilitation at King's College London, was awarded her damehood for services to clinical psychology. She said she was proud to be able to include service users in her research at the KCL Service User Research Enterprise, and pointed out how generous these people had been with their time.

She added: 'The honour is important. I come from working-class beginnings, not privately educated, not an Oxbridge graduate and not a man, which *The Times* identified as the characteristics of most receiving honours. So this is also an award for women in science. But it is also one of the honours for contributions to mental health, bringing it to the attention of the public and fighting stigma.'

Professor Dame Til Wykes

But, Wykes said, there was still much to achieve in terms of finding better treatments, reducing stigma and including service users and their families in services and research. 'We now await the Mental Health Taskforce and hope that the research section is not watered down and that the government will take the mental health research priorities seriously by backing them with hard cash. That will be my next campaign and I hope many others will join me.'

Professor Dame Margaret Whitehead was given her DBE for her work in public health. Her fascinating career has involved research on social and health inequalities and as well as being Head of the Department of Public Health and Policy, Institute of Psychology, Health and Society at the University of Liverpool. She also works for the World Health Organization as head of the Collaborating Centre for Policy Research on the Social Determinants of Health.

After an initial degree in biology and experience in medical, research Whitehead became interested in taking a more whole-person approach and began work looking at populations and wider implications affecting people's health. In the 1980s Whitehead was involved in updating the Black Report – a seminal review of health inequalities in the UK which the Tory government chose not to act on. This, and a similar response to the Whitehead Report, only led to the documents achieving worldwide attention and becoming a Penguin non-fiction bestseller (*Inequalities in Health*).

Along with colleague Göran Dahlgren, Whitehead also developed the widely cited and influential Dahlgren–Whitehead model to illustrate determinants of health. She told *The Psychologist*: 'When I found out I was on the list my initial reaction was disbelief followed by being overwhelmed and humbled. But I've had a wonderful response from people and it's slowly sinking in.'

In her future work, Whitehead said, she is hoping to develop ways of evaluating population-wide policies that tackle working and living conditions. She added: 'The University of Liverpool is very supportive of public health, and the city of Liverpool as a whole has a long and proud tradition of action on public health. The whole context of the place is very nurturing for these ideas.'

Professor Dame Margaret Whitehead

Awarded an OBE was Professor Nichola Rumsey, Co-Director of the Centre for Appearance Research (CAR) which she founded at the University of the West of England in 1992. The centre has since grown to become the world's largest research group focusing on the role of appearance and body image in people's lives (see tinyurl.com/visidiff).

Rumsey has built an international reputation for her research in the field, which started with the completion of her PhD Psychological Problems Associated with Facial Disfigurement in 1983. Since then she has attracted more than £7 million funding to support research on appearance. She also worked as the British Psychological Society's consultant to the Department of Health from 2004 to 2010, is an Honorary Life Member of the South African Burns Society, and an Honorary Life Member of the British Association of Aesthetic Plastic Surgeons.

She said she was honoured and humbled to receive the award, and added: 'In a world ever more preoccupied with appearance, living with disfigurement can present significant challenges. The contributions of the Centre for Appearance Research in addressing the needs of affected people and their families have been achieved by a team of enthusiastic, hard-working and committed researchers over the past 25 years.'

Professor Nichola Rumsey OBE

Rumsey added that she felt privileged and proud to have played a part in the team since its beginnings and added: 'UWE has encouraged CAR to grow and flourish since the establishment of the Centre in 1992. The enthusiasm for CAR's work and pride in the Centre's accomplishments have been crucial to its success.'

Paul Farmer, Chief Executive of Mind, was also named a CBE for services to mental health; and Paul Boyle, former Chief Executive of the ESRC and current Vice Chancellor at the University of Leicester was named a CBE for services to social science. ER

Above and beyond

BBC Radio 4's *All in the Mind* is encouraging nominations of particularly inspirational individuals, groups and professionals for its 2016 awards. Its presenter Claudia Hammond spoke to *The Psychologist* about the 2014 winners, the difficulty of judging this type of award, and the incredible stories of individual support she has encountered throughout the process.

The All in the Mind Awards are split into three categories honouring an individual, professional and group seen as outstanding in supporting people with mental health difficulties. Among the previous winners were Brighton's MindOut, a service run by and for the LGBTQ community, and Steve McDonagh who was nominated by his employee Andrew King for support given to him both in and out of the workplace.

Since the 2014 awards both the three winners and six finalists have continued their work and done even more to support others. Maya, who nominated her mother in the individual category for support she received in her battle with anorexia writes a blog sharing her experiences and said anyone thinking about nominating someone should do it, and added: 'I didn't think for a minute that we'd be at the award ceremony. It's a nice way to say thank you and to recognise what she [Mum] has done for me. It also gives other people the opportunity to recognise it, Mum's friends are always saying how kind she is. It's a good time to step back and say that you've done something good.'

Hammond said while judging the first set of awards many people stood out, but even small acts of kindness seen by people with mental health problems made a massive difference to their lives, she said: 'One person said when she was going through depression her friend left a cup of tea outside her door every morning, even on those days she couldn't get out of bed to drink it she really appreciated the fact her friend never gave up on her. That's one thing that really stands out – people's persistence in trying to help.'

Though judging these awards may seem like a near-impossible task, Hammond said the stories she has encountered have reassured her of the amazing lengths humans will go to in supporting each other. She added: 'It's really hard, you don't want anyone to be the "winner" as such. We try to include all of the nine shortlisted finalists and emphasise the fact that both the nominee and the person who put them forward are winners as a pair. It's not about people with mental health problems being passive and not helping themselves – it's about rewarding both parties.'

Those nominated, Hammond said, show incredible humility: 'All the nominees said their actions are something anyone would do, which is the same thing heroes always say. But the truth is not everyone would act as they do in these situations – they go above and beyond.'

Author Matt Haig, Kevan Jones MP, Marion Janner, founder of Star Wards, and clinical psychologist Linda Blair will join Hammond on the judging panel. They will be looking for examples of support that showed greater than expected levels of compassion, understanding or practical assistance. ER

The deadline for nominations is midnight on 31 January 2016 – see tinyurl.com/aitmaward16. Awards will be announced during a ceremony at the Wellcome Collection in London on 27 June 2016

A decade of delights

For a decade, the British Psychological Society's Research Digest blog has been sharing the latest peer-reviewed research with an ever-growing, international audience. In its birthday year it pushed 900,000 page views in a month and topped the iTunes social sciences podcast chart with 'PsychCrunch'. This event in London (supported by Psychology Press) gathered 130 of the finest minds, including the researchers and bloggers who have conducted and shared much of that work, to celebrate and to discuss 'Psychology Heaven and Hell'.

Opening the evening, Dr Jon Sutton (Managing Editor) explained that he and the Digest Editor Dr Christian Jarrett had wanted to showcase the wonderful diversity of the psychology research featured on the blog over the years, with something that is fundamental to us as human beings. 'Tonight is not about religious concepts of heaven and hell, it's about one story, the oldest: light versus dark.' Beyond the individual, the night was also about our discipline. Recent years have seen an increasing internal struggle, with psychology shining a self-critical light on its own theory, research and practice. Research fraud and involvement in torture have dragged our beloved subject towards hell; many psychologists, some of them in the assembled audience, have tried to pull us back towards the light via a self-critical approach to our methods and ways of reporting our findings. 'But perhaps we're still liable to temptation, seduction, by alluring results and conclusions,' Sutton said. 'It's an uneasy time for psychology. It seems to me that not a week passes without a headline questioning whether we can really trust what we find.'

After describing the richly layered personal traits that made the evening's guest speakers instant choices, Sutton introduced Dr Christian Jarrett. 'Just look at that angelic face! But then, in the words of the film *The Usual Suspects*, "the greatest trick the devil ever pulled was to convince the world he didn't exist".' The evening was to follow the structure of the thousands of journal articles Jarrett has digested over the years, with him picking up the 'Method' of being a science writer.

He began with a 'confession' – his envy of the fantastic Mind Hacks had inspired him 10 years ago to turn the Research Digest e-mail newsletter (launched in 2003) into a blog. Moving on to his own heaven and hell, he gave cautionary tales of Digest items going all round the world's media. Jarrett's own 'twist' can end up being the hook for the coverage: 'Suddenly my imagination becomes scientific fact!' His own 'hell' was internet trolls; 'heaven' the dedication and ingenuity of psychology researchers. 'I gave up conducting psychology research because it is frankly too difficult: that's why I write about it instead! So I would like to pay tribute to psychological scientists – without them there wouldn't be a Research Digest.'

One of those psychologists, Professor Andy Field (University of Sussex), took the baton to discuss 'Results: Is Psychology Damned to Hell?' Null hypothesis significance testing came under fire as Field's personal hell: 'It tells us nothing about importance because *p* depends upon sample size; it provides no evidence about the null (or alternative) hypothesis; and it encourages all-or-nothing thinking' (nicely illustrated by the despair of researchers seeing '$p > .05$' results churning out of SPSS). 'Psychology heaven, in terms of getting a professorship, is doing lots of really large studies – you'll get significant effects regardless of the actual importance of what you're looking at'. Professor Field also pointed to other assumptions about our data that should, but very rarely do, lead to the adoption of robust methods of analysis.

Using Ioannidis' idea of 'Positive Predictive Value' – the post-study probability that a significant finding reflects a true relationship – Field then showed that psychology is vulnerable to 'dodgy' findings. A number of exploratory effects are often tested; research designs usually have considerable flexibility, in that there are often a number of different methods that can be used to measure an effect; sample sizes and effect sizes are often small; research may well be on 'hot topics'; and academic prejudices can play a part. Replication is clearly key to trustworthy science, but Field questioned whether researchers' attitudes around this are currently rather self-serving and defensive.

So is psychology damned to hell? Professor Uta Frith (University College London) looked to reassure in a 'Discussion' that would 'integrate, interpret, imagine and improve'. Replication was again a key focus: 'We all know that the purpose of running an experiment is to discover what experiment you should have done!'

In fact, finding the unexpected is Professor Frith's idea of psychology heaven. Quoting William Blake's 'The Marriage of Heaven and Hell', she said 'Without Contraries is no progression'. A cautionary proverb for psychologists was perhaps there in Blake's line, 'I have always found that Angels have the vanity to speak of themselves as the only wise; this they do with a confident insolence sprouting from systematic reasoning.' The key, Professor Frith said, is to always ask 'Why?' when you are conducting a replication – a failed attempt to replicate can still push our understanding forward.

Using examples from the Research Digest, Professor Frith gave 'heavenly' examples of when folk psychology appeared to be overturned. 'Consigned to hell' were 'blaming parents', 'ignoring genetic evidence', 'conducting fMRI studies just because you can', and 'atheoretical research which is just fishing'.

Professor Frith concluded with a call for more 'slow science' ('test more subjects, do more trials, be more careful'), and for science communication to educate and build trust in psychology. Returning one last time to the 'heaven and hell' theme, she advised: 'We need to always see two sides – this is the way to understand the mind… We need the big picture, and we need to go underneath into deep thought.'

Dr Sutton concluded by thanking the assembled audience for helping the Research Digest to grow over the years, and encouraging others to blog: 'it is important to engage with the public and communicate science, so give it a go!'

Visit the Research Digest blog www.bps.org.uk/digest and join 37,000 subscribers to the free fortnightly e-mail http://digest.bps.org.uk/p/our-email.html. See also our preview of the event https://thepsychologist.bps.org.uk/psychology-heaven-and-hell which includes links to the speakers and to more 'heavenly' and 'hellish' psychology. Follow @ResearchDigest on Twitter.

Call to join societies network

University psychology societies may be an overlooked, yet excellent place for breeding ideas, peer-support and valuable experiences for the future. One head of such a society is hoping to form a network of similar groups across the UK.

The President of the University of Derby's psychology society, Keith Flint, said he has seen the group move from strength to strength during its first year of existence and has since become the second largest society at the university. Given that success, he is hoping to form a network of all psychology societies across all the UK universities.

Flint told *The Psychologist* that the Derby society runs workshops for its members to help them through university and expand their skill sets, including courses in public speaking, networking and revision techniques. He added: 'We've also managed to arrange for members to visit Broadmoor Hospital. We'll be given a tour of the grounds, speak to members of staff, hear from psychologists that work there and find out what it's like to work there.'

Despite being set to graduate this year, Flint is hoping to form this national network of psychology societies before that time. He said: 'We want to unite all psychology students across the country to give students more opportunities and experiences both during their time at university and when they graduate.'

As well as helping members to meet like-minded individuals, this large network could even lead to eventual working relationships in research or other areas of the discipline, Flint said. On a practical level, he added, it would allow students who wanted to go on to postgraduate studies at other institutions to speak to students at those universities to find out what their studying experiences were like.

Flint, who is hoping to pursue postgraduate study in psychology and eventually a career in the area, said he thought societies like this encourage students to actively pursue and interest in the topic, which in turn helps their career progression. He added: 'University psychology societies consist of the next generation of psychologists, some of whom may one day make a massive breakthrough in the field of psychology and advance the subject into the future. Which is why these societies are so important, not only to the students in them but also to the area of psychology as a whole.' ER

I If you run or are a member of a university-based psychology society and would like to join Flint's network e-mail him on psychology.soc@udsu.org.uk. And why not share with us the contribution your psychology society makes – e-mail psychologist@bps.org.uk or tweet us @psychmag.

PSYCHOLOGIST TO HEAD CIPD

The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development have announced Professor Sir Cary Cooper CBE as their new President. The Board of the CIPD, the professional body for human resources and people development, nominated Sir Cary, an Honorary Fellow of the BPS, for the role to support its mission to champion better work and working lives by promoting the importance of good people management and development.

Professor Cooper, who will hold the presidency for an initial tenure of three years, commented: 'The fast changing nature of work means there's never been a more crucial time for organisations to put wellbeing at the heart of their culture. The CIPD has long championed how employee wellbeing is key to building high-performing, productive workplaces, and I'm delighted to be given the chance to work with the CIPD and its members to move this important agenda forward. Understanding the future of work and the workplace and the role of the HR and L&D professions is key to the strategic agenda for the CIPD, and I look forward to engaging in this wider debate with the CIPD and the communities it supports and engages with.' JS

I To read more about Professor Sir Cary Cooper, see http://thepsychologist.bps.org.uk/volume-28/november-2015/be-brave-psychology-needs-you and http://thepsychologist.bps.org.uk/volume-23/edition-9/one-one-cary-cooper

5 minutes with...

Dr Noreen Tehrani

Noreen Tehrani, the Chair Elect of the British Psychological Society's Crisis, Disaster and Trauma Psychology Section (launched just over a year ago) is passionate about making sure that people and organisations exposed to traumatic events get the best possible guidance, support and interventions to help them understand how traumatic events affect communities, organisations and individuals. Whilst a small minority of people exposed to traumatic incidents develop post-trauma disorders, the provision of a supportive initial response can reduce distress and provide opportunities to build future resilience and post-trauma growth.

What sparked your interest in trauma?
I joined the Post Office in 1991 as an occupational health psychologist. On the first week I had to deal with a kidnapping of the family of a postal worker taken hostage by armed raiders. It then became apparent that this was not particularly unusual in the Post Office, so my first task was to design and implement a programme of trauma support to help employees deal with armed raids, violent attacks, dog bites and other traumatic incidents. At that time there was very little written about trauma in organisations. I found papers by Atle Dyregrov and Jeff Mitchell from which I created and introduced an organisational programme of trauma support. What I found particularly rewarding was the speed with which early trauma interventions reduced trauma symptoms.

Has the scientific approach to trauma changed in recent years?
The rapid advances in our understanding of the biological basis of trauma has been highly influential in increasing our understanding of the nature of traumatic stress. The discovery that trauma changes the operation of the neuro-endocrine system helped in the understanding of hyperarousal symptoms. Neuroimaging has started to map the brain structures and pathways involved in trauma responses. This has provided an insight into many trauma responses, including showing how changes to the corpus callosum and prefrontal cortex of traumatised children predicts developmental problems.

Over the past 10 years there has been a rapid increase in trauma interventions, leading to robust debate on the nature of evidence. The role of randomised controlled trials and the place of other forms of evidence is being examined, with the growing recognition of the importance of looking for clinically significant findings when working with trauma.

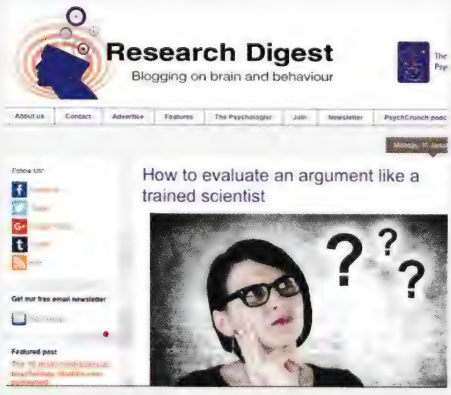
Is there a risk that psychologists can do more harm than good tackling trauma?
In my experience there are two kinds of harm caused by psychologists working with traumatised clients. The first is by omission where a lack of recognition of the presence of the trauma results in the psychologist adopting an ineffective therapeutic model. Typically, clients become disillusioned when they see no reduction in their symptoms and as a result may refuse appropriate treatments when offered. The second type of harm occurs when the psychologist fails to follow one or more of the fundamental rules of working with traumatised clients, which include:

- recognising of the importance of social support;
- providing for psycho-education;
- giving opportunities to make sense of the trauma story;
- building self-calming skills;
- showing respect and sensitivity to personal, cultural and social differences; and
- offering ongoing support.

Why are you particularly interested in secondary trauma?
Most of my work is in organisations, some of my clients are directly involved in dealing with disasters or exposed to serious physical or psychological abuse. However, many experience their trauma through engaging with primary victims of trauma as a rescuer, paramedic, law enforcer, advocate, teacher or humanitarian worker. The development of secondary trauma or compassion fatigue through vicarious experience is well established and requires organisations where there is a high level of risk of traumatic exposure to identify those workers particularly vulnerable. There is a need to ensure they are screened, educated and supported in developing essential resilience capacities. Psychologists working with trauma are also vulnerable, and I have recently contributed a chapter to a book on supervision for trauma psychologists, which sets out what good trauma supervision involves.

What are your hopes for the Crisis, Disaster and Trauma Psychology Section?
As a very new and highly ambitious section of the BPS we would like to encourage psychologists from other Divisions and Sections to work with us to provide answers to some of the most difficult questions that the world faces today including: How can we support traumatised refugees and victims of war.? Which early trauma interventions work best? What can we do to help victims of historic child abuse? Should psychologists be part of emergency planning? Is EMDR better than TF-CBT in treating trauma?

We cannot solve these problems on our own, so we decided to offer a series of trauma workshops as part of the professional development programme in the hope that others would join us to take part in this important work – see www.bps.org.uk/events/introduction-trauma.



Keep up with the latest research in psychology at www.bps.org.uk/digest and by following @ResearchDigest on Twitter

Diverse and colourful

Ella Rhodes reports from the annual Psychology4Graduates event organised by the BPS

At Friends House in London recent or near-graduates of psychology came to hear talks about the many, varied and sometimes surprising routes into working in the field. The seven excellent speakers inspired the audience with tales of a Jedi mother, rejecting a yuppie lifestyle in favour of helping others and how fashion psychology could impact society.

James Randall-James, co-chair of the British Psychological Society's Division of Clinical Psychology's Pre-Qualifications Group, and fellow member of the group Steph Minchin, both University of Hertfordshire clinical psychology PhD students, gave a fascinating talk on the best ways into the field as well as general careers advice. They pointed out the areas in which clinical psychologists may work and the sorts of problems they focus on in therapy and conversations with clients. They spoke about the varied ways in which clients are assessed, including clinical interviews, psychometric tests, neurocognitive tests and clinical observations, as well as the various interventions in which they are trained. Throughout the talk they told the audience of their personal career paths and emphasised the importance for those wishing to embark on a career in clinical psychology to gain as much experience in their chosen area as possible before applying to a PhD course.

Psychologist, organisational consultant, executive coach and former NBA basketball player John Amaechi OBE [see https://thepsychologist.bps.org.uk/way-we-are-all-either-jedi-or-sith], held the rapt audience with his wonderful talk about his route into psychology with an atmospheric portrait of his mother. He said as a young boy he would accompany his mother, who worked as a GP, on house visits. He said of these visits to grieving relatives or those with very sick family members: 'People would yell and cry, but she would let them talk and say what they needed to say and would cut through the clutter in the air... Suddenly the tension would drop and although they knew everything was not going to be OK they felt like they could cope in that moment, and I found that amazing.' After seeing the first *Star Wars* film and witnessing Obi-Wan Kenobi's way with people, he came to the sudden realisation that his own mother might just be a Jedi. He added: 'What brought me to psychology was seeing the impact that, what I can now see as mindful attention and purposeful focus, can have.'

Amaechi later began to study psychology while playing basketball in San Diego and went on to do a master's degree in marriage and family therapy. He now runs Amaechi Performance Systems, working with some of the top businesses in the world. Though Amaechi said his own relationship with academic research had been 'tenuous' so far, he emphasised that future research needs to capture the true diversity of the world and not leave important questions unasked. In giving the gathered graduates tips for success, which he said felt 'far too bold', he stressed the need to question the status quo, and not simply accept well-established ways of working. Amaechi also drew attention to the value of mindfulness in the workplace – particularly from a leadership point of view. He said the world was full of disproportionately powerful people and added one of the most important roles he had was to make these giants of industry realise they are giants, which will hopefully lead them to be more aware of the potential harm they can commit – even unintentionally – and the potential good they can do with that power.

Prolific psychology writer Rob Yeung then gave a great general talk about how psychology graduates can stand out in a competitive environment. He emphasised the importance of giving an appearance of confidence, competence and charisma during interviews and in working life as a whole. Yeung bravely used his own mistakes in the working world as a basis for his advice – he pointed out that after working in a large management consultancy he moved to a smaller firm and immediately tried to enforce all he had learned at this larger business on the smaller one. This, needless to say, did not go down very well with his new employers. He said: 'When you're in a new position, focus on fitting in and being helpful.' He then gave some examples of research into job interviews to help graduates in their job hunting and emphasised the importance of having composure and speaking fluently, suggesting that graduates use the 'three Ps' before an interview: prepare, practice and perform. He also gave a handy tip for a quick fix to boosting confidence – he said some research had found that if interviewees spent five minutes writing about a time they felt they had power and influence, they performed better at mock job interviews.

George Kitsaras, the BPS's 50,000th member, recently started a job as an Assistant Psychologist for Birmingham and Solihull Mental Health Trust. He spoke about his career path moving from Greece to study for a MSc in clinical psychology at the University of Reading. Kitsaras gave a great summary of his role in Birmingham on a medium-secure men's unit and outlined some of the benefits of graduate BPS membership. He advised the graduates who wanted to pursue clinical psychology careers that they should be prepared for a potentially long road to qualification and should aim to get as much work experience as possible in the field.

Dr Carolyn Mair was next to speak about her extremely varied career path, which now sees her leading the only course in the world that looks into the role of psychology in fashion [see tinyurl.com/jfnqzkc]. Mair's first role was as a graphic designer and she came to psychology in her late 30s, completing a degree in psychology and computing at Bournemouth and later an MSc at Portsmouth. Her new course at the London School of Fashion looks at how psychology impacts the fashion industry and the people who buy into the industry. She said she hopes that her students can take away a greater understanding of psychology from the course and apply this to the dilemmas facing the world of fashion, including questions around eating disorders and sustainability. 'It's not about a person's ability to cite a certain paper but it's much more about the bigger picture and looking at, and tackling, the issues that are out there. That's why psychology degrees are so valuable – they give you the skills to contribute to society.'

Finally, BPS President Jamie Hacker Hughes spoke about his extraordinary career path from wannabe maxillofacial surgeon to army officer, high-flying IT salesman and marketing director, to taking a 90 per cent salary drop to become a psychiatric nursing assistant at the Maudsley Hospital. After qualifying as a clinical psychologist he was appointed Head of Defence Clinical Psychology in 2007 and the following year became Defence Consultant Advisor in Psychology to the MoD.

All in all, a day that was as diverse and colourful as the discipline it was encouraging the audience to enter. Well worth keeping an eye out for next year's event. ER

Psychology on the edge

Online magazine *The Edge* has again drawn on a diverse range of the world's sharpest minds to answer its annual question, this year: 'What do you consider the most interesting recent [science] news? And what makes it important?' We have drawn together some of the most interesting and topical answers given by psychologists.

Psychology in crisis

Perhaps unsurprisingly many psychologists chose the reproducibility crisis, and other concerns around the practices of some academics and journals in psychology, as their choice for the most interesting recent news in science. Psychology researcher and author Judith Rich Harris pointed to papers published in 2011 and 2012 that raised some initial doubts over findings in psychology – both published in *Psychological Science*.

What Harris described as 'the final punch' for the topic came last year when *Science* published work finding only 36 per cent of almost 100 studies in the top three psychology journals could be replicated. She suggested two reasons for the decline of truth in scientific research, writing: 'First, research is no longer something people do for fun, because they're curious. It has become something that people are required to do if they want a career in the academic world… People are doing research for the wrong reasons: not to satisfy their curiosity but to satisfy their ambitions.' She suggests people should not be rewarded on the basis of how much they publish.

Second, Harris suggested the vetting of research papers had also gone awry and wrote: 'I propose that this job [vetting papers] should be performed by paid experts – accredited specialists in the analysis of research. Perhaps this could provide an alternative path into academia for people who don't particularly enjoy the nitty-gritty of doing research but who love ferreting out the flaws and virtues in the research of others.'

Professor of Psychology at Yale University, Paul Bloom, also touched on the topic and said some of the most interesting science news had been about science itself, referring to psychology as 'patient zero' with its well-publicised cases of fraud and concerns around psychology experiments and analyses of results. He said that although there was a lot to complain about regarding how this story was handled by the mainstream media, with psychology being singled out where a problem exists in other fields, it was still a significant story and good could come of it. He concluded: 'A serious public discussion of what scientists are doing wrong and how they can do better will not only lead to better science, it will help advance scientific understanding more generally.'

Ellen Winner, a psychologist at Boston College, said despite the 'jarring' findings in the *Science* paper mentioned above, the implications on psychological science would result in better practices in journals and universities. She pointed to the fact that many journals will now not accept single studies with small sample sizes and *p* values just below .05. She added: 'Because new policies will result in fewer publications per researcher, universities will have to change their hiring, tenure and rewards systems, and granting and award-giving agencies will have to do so too. We will need to stop the lazy practice of counting publications and citations and instead read critically for quality.' Winner concluded that, although a sea change takes time, it would result in the reporting of findings that are more likely to be true rather than urban myths, which in turn would lead to a better reputation for the field and a better understanding of human nature.

The rise of interdisciplinary approaches and big data

Moving away from the somewhat marred past of psychology and onto a seemingly, cautiously bright future from Adam Alter, Assistant Professor of Marketing at Stern School of Business (New York University). He pointed to the huge rise in interdisciplinary research as some of the most interesting science news recently. Alter wrote that while social scientists, particularly psychologists, used to examine individuals through a zoom lens, with the growth of academics from varied fields working together, we are garnering an increasingly 'wide-angle lens' view of the world. He wrote that another benefit of this type of project was encouraging academics to adopt a wider view within their own fields and added: 'Many prominent papers published this year [2015] also include brain imaging data (a telephoto zoom lens), and data from social media sites and large scale economic panels (wide-angle lenses).'

Alter also points to researchers who have begun to complement 'big data' analyses with 'zoomed-in' physiological measures such as eye tracking and brain imaging analyses. He concluded: 'The big

news here is not just that scientists are borrowing from other disciplines, but also that their borrowing has turned over richer, broader answers to a growing range of scientific questions.'

Why we should fear the fear of unlikely threats

Professor of Psychology David G. Myers (Hope College) and his German colleague Gerd Gigerenzer (see December 2015 issue) both gave answers around a similar theme – how our unwarranted fears of terrorism when compared with more immediate threats, can be far more damaging than we might first expect. Myers wrote that recent surveys have shown we are much less fearful of greater, everyday threats, than of terrorism.

He asked why we fear flying when the drive to the airport is the most dangerous part of a trip. He wrote: 'Underlying our exaggerated fears is the "availability heuristic": We fear what's readily available in memory. Vivid, cognitively available images… distort our judgements of risk.' Myers added that we hardly notice the half-million children who quietly die from rotavirus per year: 'Bill Gates once observed – the equivalent of four 747s full of children every day.'

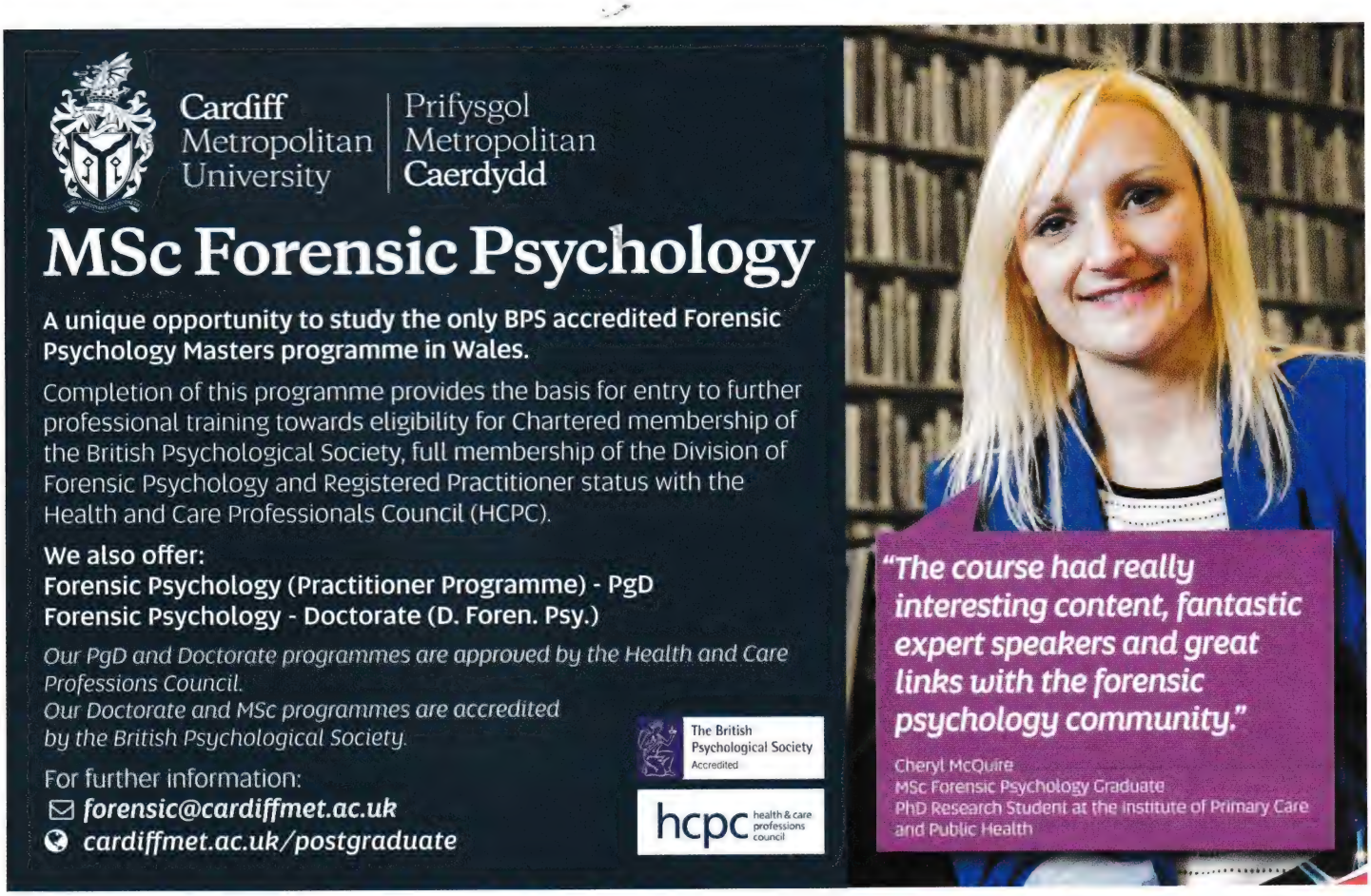
Myers pointed out that 'news-fed, cognitively available images' make us overly fearful of tiny risks – which may go some way to explaining why an estimated $500 million is spent per U.S. terrorist death, compared to $10,000 per cancer death. He concluded, chillingly, with a quote from Media researcher George Gerbner's 1981 words to a congressional subcommittee: 'Fearful people are more dependent, more easily manipulated and controlled, more susceptible to deceptively simple, strong, tough measures and hard-line postures.'

Gigerenzer, Director of the Center for Adaptive Behaviour and Cognition (Max Planck Institute for Human Development) similarly pointed to statistics that each year more Americans die from lightning than terrorism, and increasingly are more likely to die from preventable medical errors in hospitals – unnecessary deaths have risen from an estimated 98,000 in 1999 to 440,000 annually.

He explained this fear of what, in all likelihood, will not kill us: 'It is called a fear of dread risks. This fear is elicited by a situation in which many people die within a short time.' He pointed to striking figures that following 9/11 many Americans avoided flying and drove their cars instead resulting in around 1600 deaths from car accidents – more than the number killed the four hijacked planes.

Gigerenzer referred to this as Osama Bin Laden's second strike and wrote: 'Although billions have been poured into Homeland Security and similar institutions to prevent the first strike of terrorists, almost no funding has been provided to prevent the second strike.' He concluded that making the public more aware of how terrorists exploit people's fears could save lives and added: 'It could also open people's eyes to the fact that some politicians and other interest groups work on keeping our dread risk fear aflame to nudge us into accepting personal surveillance and restriction of our democratic liberties.'

Many other psychologists contributed, including Steven Pinker, Tania Lombrozo, John Tooby, Lisa Feldman Barrett, Bruce Hood, Nicholas Humphrey, Kurt Gray, June Gruber, Abigail Marsh and Diana Deutsch (see http://edge.org/annual-questions). ER



What is it like to meet the man who murdered your brother?

Traditionally, the criminal justice system has been so focused on ensuring that offenders are suitably punished that the interests and needs of victims are often overlooked. Nowhere is this more of an issue than in murder cases, where the relatives and friends of the victims are dragged through traumatic retellings of the crime. One approach that seeks to give relatives and friends (known as 'co-victims') a voice, and to help address their suffering, is known as 'restorative justice' and it involves victims (or, in the case of a murder, co-victims) meeting face to face with the offender.

While restorative justice is becoming an increasingly common practice, psychologically informed research into its effects is relatively rare. Indeed, this case study is the first ever investigation into the effects of restorative justice on the relatives of a murder victim (specifically, two sisters of a young man who was murdered). John (names have been changed), a bar manager in London, was murdered at the age of 30 by two men he'd invited back to his flat one night after work. One of the men, Michael, is serving a life sentence for strangling John; the other aggressor had his sentence reduced to manslaughter on appeal after claiming to have a diagnosis of Asperger's.

Fifteen years later, two of John's sisters accepted an invitation to take part in a restorative justice plan for them to meet Michael. They had both suffered terribly since losing their brother: one sister, Janet, was diagnosed with clinical depression and missed 18 months of work; the other, Barbara, developed an alcohol problem and attempted to take her own life. Mark Walters, the author of the case study, explains that these long-term difficulties are common among the co-victims of murders. Often, as was the case with Barbara who compulsively re-watched a documentary about her brother's murder, they become 'stuck in a cycle of re-living incoherent pain and suffering'.

In *British Journal of Criminology*

Janet and Barbara were both keen to meet the man who killed their brother. They wanted to ask him why he'd killed John, and especially whether he'd been motivated by homophobia. This desire to discover an offender's motives is apparently very common among victims, perhaps because it can help bring coherence to their narrative of the crime. Michael told the sisters that he was not homophobic, and that he and his accomplice had simply seen John as an easy target. He said he'd had no intention to kill John, but that things had gone wrong in a way he'd regretted ever since. Janet said this gave her a new understanding of her loss, one that (in Walters' words) 'put a stop to 15 years of recurring questions'.

Another motivation that the sisters had was to explain to the killer the profound consequences of his actions. They told him about their brother ('if he wasn't my brother he could quite easily have been our friend...he was a nice guy...the guy that went with the Soup Kitchen helping the homeless...he was that guy'). In turn Michael apologised to Janet and Barbara, and they felt his apology was genuine and that they'd successfully conveyed to him how his actions were having consequences years later.

The sisters also heard Michael's perspective: he'd been abused from an early age, was homeless from age 11 and had drink problems. They were sceptical at first, but then they began to soften. 'I thought, you know, "he's a thug", "he's a monster"... and it was quite shocking to see him, he was just...normal you know? ... I could understand where he was coming from, what he was saying, and why it happened,' said Janet.

In a way, Walters explains, the two parties (the sisters and the killer) were revealing each other's humanity. The meeting ended with them shaking hands and Michael promising not to return to the problems of his earlier life. The sisters said the process had been extremely beneficial. Barbara had previously rung Janet almost daily for years to discuss their brother's murder. After the restorative justice meeting, this stopped.

However, there was an unexpected emotion that Walters highlights as potentially problematic and important for future research ('We must remain cautious about "rolling out" a measure that can give rise to new psychological challenges,' he says). That is, Janet came to realise that she actually liked the murderer Michael, which ultimately led to difficult feelings of guilt. 'I came out feeling very, very guilty ... cause I felt I shouldn't have been thinking anything like that [liking Michael] at all ... I shoulda, absolutely hate him and not feel any, not have any positive thoughts about him or have any compassion about him but I did.'

For his part, Michael said the meeting was one of the toughest things he'd ever done, and that nothing could be as intense as coming face to face with your victim's family:

> ...one sister asked 'do you consider yourself to be evil to the core? ... to be asked that by anyone is difficult but to be asked by [the] victims [of] their brother you've murdered, it was extremely hard to answer. [Interviewer: What did you say?] I answered honestly, I said that what I had done was serious and was evil but I don't consider myself evil to the core. The sister said that they thought we don't think you are. [Interviewer: How did that make you feel?]... very emotional to hear your victims, whose brother you've murdered, at the end of the day you've murdered their brother [and] they don't consider you're evil to the core. I was welling up... the sisters had tears rolling down their eyes.

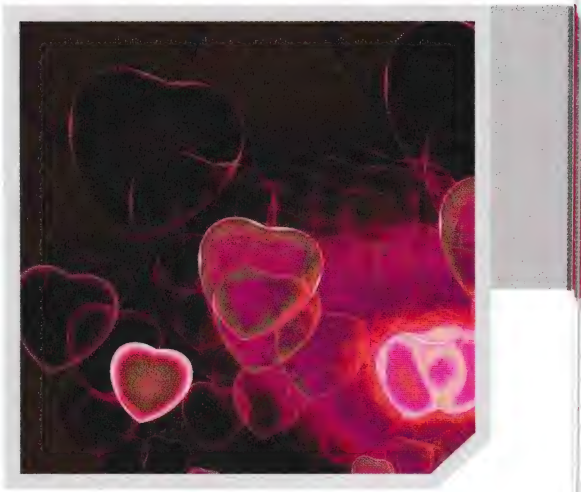
Walters said this effect of restorative justice on offenders could help break the self-fulfilling prophesy whereby criminals come to behave in ways consistent with how they believe the world sees them, as evil monsters.

Of course, the findings need to be interpreted with caution: this is just one story and as Walters explains, 'it is not possible to draw generalisable conclusions.' Also, restorative justice is not for everyone: indeed, John's two other sisters declined to take part because they felt too angry. However, the research certainly highlights interesting points for future research.

'Most significantly,' Walters concludes, 'The emotionality behind such [restorative] dialogue further enabled [all involved] to develop a renewed understanding of each other. Collectively, the interpersonal connections that emerged allowed all stakeholders to move beyond their experience of homicide better equipped to deal with its painful aftermath.' CJ

It's better to have two passions in life than one

In *Journal of Happiness Studies*



As long as you don't become obsessive and defensive about it, there's a wealth of evidence to show that having a passion in life is good for you psychologically – people with a so-called 'harmonious passion' (but not so much those with an 'obsessive passion') tend to be happier, to enjoy more positive emotions and be more satisfied with life, as compared with people who don't have a passion. As we see in the new year, a study published in the *Journal of Happiness Studies* poses a simple question: given how beneficial it is to have one harmonious passion, what's the effect of having two?

Benjamin Schellenberg and Daniel Bailis didn't go into this research with any firm predictions: they reasoned that perhaps the effect of having two passions would be additive, so people with two would show even more psychological benefits than those with just one. But on the other hand, they considered it plausible that having two passions could get a little complicated – juggling the two might get stressful and each might detract from the other.

To test this, the researchers surveyed 1218 undergrads (including 878 women) about their most favourite activity and their second favourite. The students answered questions about these activities to reveal whether they were truly passions (for instance, doing something a lot would indicate that it was a passion), and if so, whether it was a harmonious passion or an obsessive passion (here, having difficulty controlling the urge to do the activity would be one sign that a passion was obsessive). The students also filled out a range of questionnaires about their moods and well-being and life-satisfaction.

Overall, 31 per cent of the sample had one passion (about half of these students had a harmonious passion, the other half had an obsessive passion), and 54 per cent of the sample had two passions (roughly a third of this group had two harmonious passions, another third had two obsessive and the remainder a mix). Consistent with past research, having a harmonious passion or two was associated with greater happiness and wellbeing than having an obsessive passion (or two), or with having no passion (15 per cent of the sample had no passions).

Focusing on just those students who had either one harmonious passion or two, the researchers found that having two was better than having one, in terms of enhanced happiness, wellbeing and positive moods. Of course it's possible that people with two passions simply spend more time on enjoyable activities than those with one passion, but actually the researchers found having two passions was associated with greater well-being and happiness gains even when the total amount of time invested across two passions was the same as the time invested by others in one passion.

'Having a passion in life may be important in the pursuit of happiness, but it may be best to have multiple passions,' the researchers said. They said future research was needed to explore the optimal number of passions to have beyond two, and to study what leads people to develop multiple harmonious passions in the first place. Before you sign up for a new hobby, bear in mind a problem with this research is its cross-sectional design (the fact it only took measures at one point in time). This means we don't know if happier people who are more satisfied with their lives are simply more likely to have multiple passions, as opposed to multiple passions causing extra happiness. **CJ**

Here's a simple way to improve your work–life boundaries

In *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*

Critical goals still unconquered at the day's end are the path to a spoiled evening, according to new research published in the *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*. But thankfully the paper outlines an effective tactic we can take to minimise their impact.

We all know our work life can disrupt our free time by supplying unwanted thoughts that pop up when we should be relaxing. But what's doing the popping: Concerns about pay, whether to bring Christmas cards in, flashbacks to spreadsheets? Severe events such as bullying can certainly cast a shadow beyond working hours. But Ball State University's Brandon Smit has identified a more common culprit – uncompleted goals.

Taking his inspiration from classic lab studies showing that uncompleted goals are particularly likely to linger in mind, Smit surveyed 103 employed people, asking them to report which goals had been ticked off and which unfinished at the close of each day, and then just before bed to report on how much these goals had occupied their thoughts that evening. As you might expect, the incomplete goals intruded more, unless they had been rated as fairly unimportant. This effect applied only to participants who reported a higher level of job involvement; those uninvested were immune.

This is no great surprise, but what can we do about it? In one sense it is advantageous for our minds to keep uncompleted goals 'live' in our system, that way they are easily triggered, which makes sure we don't forget them. The trouble is, when a TV advert references 'limited time offers' or 'customer service', these goals force themselves into mind when we're unable or don't want to act on them.

To help prevent this, Smit asked a subset of his participants, once they had described their incomplete goals, to clearly plan where, when and how they would tackle each one, for example: 'I will go into work and start at 10:00 AM in a call center in my office. Log into my computer and call customers back...' By specifying the context for action, this helped the high-involved participants to put the goals out of mind during off-work hours, and as a result their uncompleted goals produced fewer intrusions, almost as if they had the same status as completed goals. Data from a simple measure of work detachment also suggested that, using Smit's strategy, the participants found it easier to let go of work in general.

All in all, then, fretting about unfinished goals appears to be one piece of the work–life conflict puzzle, but how big a piece it is remains to be seen. Aside from the specific effect of the planning intervention on detachment, there was actually no relationship between the number of goal-related interruptions participants

reported experiencing and their overall levels of work detachment. This is perhaps because unmeasured factors are doing hidden work: take a project review meeting, for instance. This can raise many questions (Do I need to raise my game? Am I being lined up for that promotion?) that may occupy a worker's mind during his or her leisure time, even though such meetings tend to happen after important goals have already been completed. This suggests we need to gather a more holistic picture of work-life conflict, involving goals, people issues and existential concerns.

That said, this research does offer helpful insights for under-pressure professionals. While switching off work phones and leaving our briefcase at the office may be useful in developing work–life boundaries, this study reminds us that our heads will still carry work memories with us, ready to trigger. The solution tested here by Smits resembles the 'open loop' concept popularised by management consultant Dave Allen (an open loop is anything that pulls at your attention when it shouldn't). The implication is that if you capture and schedule your work activities, you'll be more likely to find some much-needed peace during downtime. **AF**

LINK FEAST

Stop Being So Self-Conscious
Relax, people aren't paying as much attention to you as you think they are. By Paul Bloom for *The Atlantic*.
www.theatlantic.com/science/archive/2015/12/stop-being-so-self-conscious/420897

The Strange Psychology of Pain Relief Medicine
How branding, descriptions of targeted effects, and tablet colours can all affect our beliefs about the effectiveness of drugs.
www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-35091242

Evidence of a Christmas Spirit Network in the Brain: Functional MRI Study
There is a 'Christmas spirit network' in the human brain, according to this new research published in the *BMJ* as part of its festive collection of daft-but-real studies.
www.bmj.com/content/351/bmj.h6266

How Popular People's Brains Are Different
A new study Digest editor Christian Jarrett covered for New York's *Science of Us* suggests there may be a self-perpetuating aspect to being one of the cool kids.
http://nymag.com/scienceofus/2015/12/how-popular-peoples-brains-are-different.html?mid=twitter_nymag

Possessed by a Mask
Every human culture has used masks for ritual disinhibition, shaming and play. Is being online the ultimate masquerade? An *Aeon* magazine essay by Sandra Newman.
https://aeon.co/essays/how-masks-explain-the-psychology-behind-online-harassment?

Why Behavioral Economics Is Cool, and I'm Not
At *Medium*, Organisational psychologist Adam Grant – yes he's a psychologist not an economist – wonders if psychology might have a bit of a branding problem.
https://medium.com/@AdamMGrant/why-behavioral-economics-is-cool-and-i-m-not-807ca32fac5b

Are women really better than men at furniture assembly (as IKEA claim)?

In Applied Cognitive Psychology

In 2008 Petra Hesser – the then head of flat-pack furniture company IKEA in Germany, now the group's Global Human Resources Manager – made headlines by claiming that women are better than men at assembling flat-pack furniture. To a group of psychologists in Norway, this pronouncement was crying out for scientific testing, especially since, if true, it would contradict many years' worth of data showing that, on average, men tend to outperform women on spatial skills, which you'd expect would be relevant to furniture construction. For their new study, the researchers (based at UiT The Arctic University of Norway) have conducted a carefully controlled comparison of men's and women's ability to assemble flat-pack furniture. Moreover, they specifically put to the test Hesser's claim that women are better than men because they take the time to read the assembly instructions.

Forty men and forty women, all university students, were challenged with constructing IKEA's 'Udden' kitchen trolley as quickly and accurately as possible. All participants worked individually on the assembly under the discreet supervision of a researcher. Half had to construct the trolley without instructions (but with an image of the final assembled product); the others had the step-by-step assembly instructions that IKEA provides with the product. The researchers also tested the participants' mental rotation skills (their ability to rotate objects and shapes in their mind's eye), and asked them questions about their experience at furniture construction and other related activities.

The main result? The men were faster and more accurate in their construction of the trolley than the women. In terms of time taken, the men took 22.48 minutes with instructions, on average, and 24.80 minutes without, compared with the women taking 23.65 minutes with instructions, on average, and 28.44 minutes without. In terms of construction scores (from 1 to 10 where 10 represents a perfectly built trolley), men averaged 8.9 with instructions,

The material in this section is taken from the Society's **Research Digest** blog at **www.researchdigest.org.uk/blog**, and is written by its editor **Dr Christian Jarrett** and contributor **Dr Alex Fradera**. Visit the blog for full coverage including references and links, additional current reports, an archive, comment, our podcast and more.

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7.6 without; the women averaged 7.5 with, and 5.7 without. These differences in performance were despite the fact the men and women reported having similar levels of experience with furniture assembly.

Digging into the results, it's clear that women benefited more than men from having instructions (they saved an average of around 4.5 minutes with instructions vs. without, whereas men only speeded up by about a minute). Indeed, the researchers highlight that once you factor out their time spent reading the instructions, the women's performance with instructions was almost as good as the men's performance without instructions. This observation backs the IKEA manager's claim that women pay more attention to instructions than men, but it doesn't support her additional claim that this makes them superior at the task.

Related to these points, and consistent with the wider literature, there was a large sex difference in mental rotation ability, with the male participants significantly outperforming the women on this measure. Interestingly, participants with poorer mental rotation abilities spent more time with the instructions, as if compensating for their weaker spatial skills. When mental rotation ability was factored out of the analysis, there was still a sex difference in time taken to construct the furniture, but the sex difference in the accuracy of the construction disappeared, which certainly suggests that one reason the male participants may have outperformed their female peers is because they tended to have superior mental rotation abilities, likely making them less dependent on the visuals in the instructions.

Looking at the participants' descriptions of their practice at other relevant activities, more sex differences emerged. For example, greater experience at furniture assembly (and with Lego) correlated with better task performance among the men, but not among the women. Similarly, more experience with finding routes on maps was correlated positively with men's furniture assembly ability, but actually showed an inverse correlation with assembly ability among the women, perhaps the researchers surmised because men and women use different mental processes when way-finding, and only the male approach has knock-on benefits for construction.

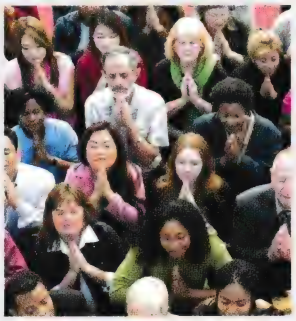
This research should not be taken as the final word on men's and women's furniture assembly abilities. Not only was this a small student sample in Norway, but there are other factors to bear in mind when appraising this kind of research. For example, men are known to be inclined to greater competitiveness than women, so perhaps they were more motivated. Here the wording of the task instructions may have been interpreted rather differently by men and women (the paper simply states that the participants were asked to assemble the furniture as efficiently as possible, with a maximum of 30 minutes allowed). Likewise, it's well established that performance can be undermined by societal stereotypes – such as the widely held belief that (despite the IKEA manager's claim) women usually are not as good as men at DIY or other manual tasks. It would have been useful to know the sex of the researcher who met and timed the participants, which may have exacerbated such effects of 'stereotype threat'.

The battle of the sexes aside, this research offers up a simple piece of practical advice because both men and women were quicker at construction when they had instructions at their disposal. '...our results attest to the value of IKEA's instructions,' the researchers concluded, 'and all furniture providers should make sure that their instructions are well designed. Time spent on good instructions should make furniture assembly less frustrating for both men and women.' **CJ**

DIGEST DIGESTED

Full reports are available at www.bps.org.uk/digest

People who score low in the personality trait 'Agreeableness' seem to be particularly adept at getting other people to listen to their creative ideas, especially if those other people also have disagreeable characters. The study is among the first to look beyond idea generation to the more social aspects of creativity. *Journal of Business and Psychology*



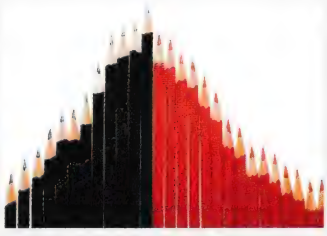
Previous research has shown that religious people tend to be more intolerant than non-believers. A new study finds this is mostly due to an extreme minority of fundamentalists. The majority of religious people actually show the same amount or even less intolerance toward people they view as different, as compared with non-believers. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*

By age four, children are already willing to make sacrifices in the name of group loyalty. Children were asked to keep secrets by a hand puppet, and they were more willing to do this if the puppet was in their 'team' (as established only minutes earlier through the distribution of coloured scarfs). *Journal of Experimental Child Psychology*

Our life stories are made up of two distinct kinds of change: transitions and turning points. The former tend to be external, are easily pointed to by oneself or others, and seem to act like temporal landmarks – thinking of them prompts recall of related memories. Turning points by contrast are more internal in nature, usually a decision or change in emotion or attitude. *Applied Cognitive Psychology*

There's a common assumption that people who swear liberally are making up for some kind of intellectual deficit. A new study challenges this claim from at least one perspective – swearing fluency tends to correlate with non-swearing verbal fluency. That is, being fluent at swearing is actually a sign of healthy verbal ability. *Language Sciences*

For understandable reasons, we usually see recessions as bad things. But an analysis of US data reveals a silver lining – during recessions, those people who stay in work tend to get more sleep and enjoy more free time. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*



No matter their experience with the puzzles, people consistently assume that anagrams will be easier to solve if they are pronounceable, than if they are unpronounceable. In fact the complete converse is true – pronounceable anagrams are trickier. The 'fluency effect' could be at play here – our tendency to react positively to things we find easier to process at a superficial level. *Cognition*

The British Psychological Society
Promoting excellence in psychology

Accreditation Programme for Psychological Therapies Services – Project Board Member

The British Psychological Society is seeking to appoint a representative to the Project Board of the Accreditation Programme for Psychological Therapies Services (APPTS).

APPTS is a quality improvement and accreditation programme for services in the UK whose primary function is to provide psychological therapies and improve the psychological wellbeing of adults in the community. It was formally launched in August 2014 as a collaboration between the Society and the Royal College of Psychiatrists' Centre for Quality Improvement. The scheme has been developed in partnership with professional organisations, national charities, the national IAPT programme team, service leads, practising therapists and service users. The core standards for all psychological therapies services that participate in the accreditation programme are organised according to the Care Quality Commission (2013) requirements that services are safe, effective, caring, responsive to people's needs and well-led. Services are measured against the standards through self and peer-review.

The Project Board consists of representatives of the British Psychological Society, the Royal College of Psychiatrists and service users. Its purpose is to:

- Oversee the development of the accreditation standards
- Monitor the operation of the scheme and ensure that processes are robust and of a high standard
- Advise on matters relating to the involvement of service users and carers
- Provide support and advice to the Accreditation Committee and the CCQI team which delivers the scheme
- Facilitate links with professional and service user bodies, the media and the public
- Produce an annual report for stakeholders
- Have financial oversight of the scheme
- Agree the future development and direction of the scheme

The Board meets four times a year. For further information about the role of BPS representative on the Board, please email Helen Clark, Director of Membership Services (helen.clark@bps.org.uk). All statements of interest must be received by noon on Friday 19 February 2016.

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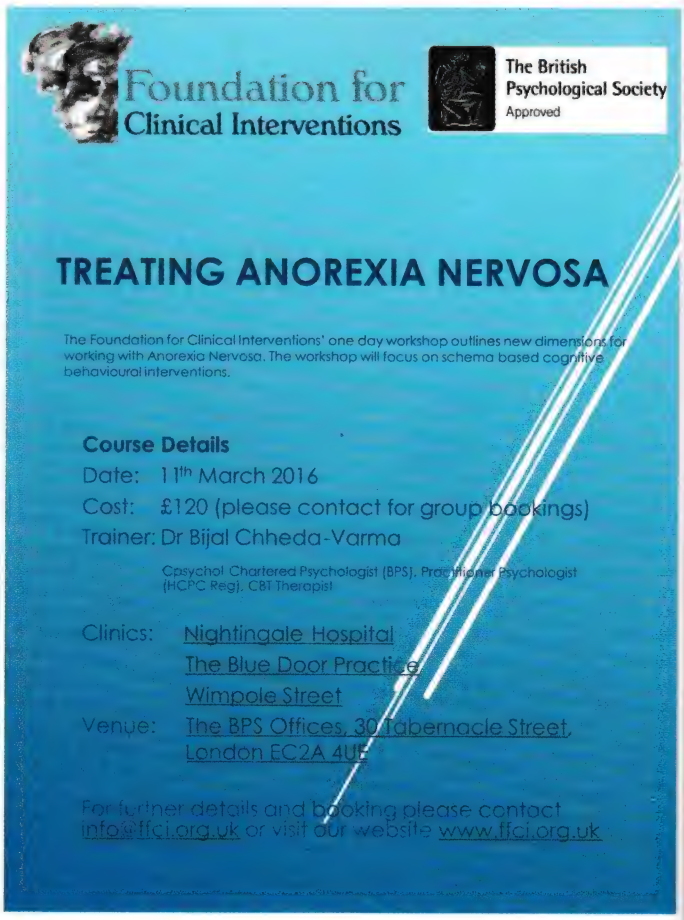

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FEATURE

Can psychology find a path to peace?

As the UK's Parliament voted to allow bombing in Syria, we asked – are there evidence-based ways to resolve this conflict?

The attacks in Paris, Beirut and more. The vote to extend UK bombing to Syria. Events of huge, worldwide significance. They demand a response, and our discipline of psychology should be well placed to provide one.

But what? In the acres of coverage during November and December, there did not seem to be a lot of psychology. Perhaps the odd piece on psychological debriefing, on the effects on children of their homes being bombed. But surely psychology can be more than the ambulance chaser? Are we really resigned to remaining quiet as the bombs fall, only emerging later to mop up the mess?

Can we turn to 'peace psychology' for ways out of a seemingly intractable war? Or is it ill-equipped to deal with the modern world, where many people characterise those we are fighting as 'extremists', who cannot be reasoned with?

"Bombing Syria will be received as an act of revenge for the Paris attack"

Does the solution rest with the next generation? Can psychology understand 'violent extremism' (see tinyurl.com/digestextrem), and is it a useful tool in cutting off the problem at source?

We sought contributions online, and we publish a selection here. Hopefully this is just the beginning in our search for evidence-based, practical contributions from psychology in finding a path to peace.

Must suffering beget suffering?

Social psychology's short answer is: No! Human behaviour is driven by goals. Our goals reflect our desires. As such, they represent our social and moral character to the outside world. Conflicts arise when our goals clash against someone else's goals. The massacres in Beirut and Paris were interpreted as representing the barbaric essence of ISIS. They could also be understood as the tragic traps set by ISIS to prove its image of the West and to assert its narrative of the conflict as an intergroup conflict between Muslims and the West.

How is one to respond to being wronged without proving the enemy's image of oneself right? Psychological research has established that a basic psychological need of victim groups is to restore their autonomy and sense of control (Nadler & Shnabel, 2008). This is reflected in our impulse to desire revenge following exposure to victimisation. But these impulses may be managed and even suppressed when questioning the goals and unintended consequences of such vengefulness. Bombing Syria will be received as an act of revenge for the Paris attack, even though Western governments may not have intended it as such. Its goal to prevent Western citizens from future similar attacks is doubtful. In fact, the bombing may reveal the West's moral inconsistencies (e.g. business relationships are maintained with countries such Saudi Arabia and China which have a high record of beheadings and other human rights violations) and its ethnocentric biases toward valuing ingroup versus outgroup lives differentially (e.g. bombing Northern Ireland was – thankfully – never considered as a strategy to eliminate the terror threats posed by the Irish Republican Army; see also Pratto & Glasford, 2008). And staying closer to psychology, would we have had this special feature in *The Psychologist* had ISIS not attacked Paris?

All of the above does mostly one thing, namely, to feed into the ISIS narrative of victimhood. Recent social psychological insights have uncovered that victimhood is best considered as a psychological resource over which conflicting groups may compete (Noor et al., 2012). It is referred to as competitive victimhood and has catastrophic consequences for conflict resolution. That is, due to mutual victimisation, each of the adversary groups develops a profound sense of being the 'real' victim. Consequently, competitive victimhood motivates groups to draw attention to their own suffering while failing to acknowledge the suffering they inflict on each other. Importantly, the more groups operate out of a competitive victimhood mindset the less likely they are to consider resolution of their violent conflict (Shnabel et al., 2013).

Is there an alternative strategy powerful enough to disrupt the ISIS's narratives without generating further suffering? Given its etymological roots, forgiveness as a strategy usually prompts sentiments ranging from naivety and unrealistic pacifism to misplaced religious and spiritual moralisation. Yet, analysis of real-life stories of victims and academic research conducted in post- and ongoing-conflict settings challenge such sentiments as well as our common association between weakness and forgiveness (Noor et al., 2008; www.theforgivenesstoolbox.com).

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A key goal of forgiveness is to break the cycle of revenge and to protect the victims from becoming victimisers. It is a desire to go beyond one's impulse for personal revenge. As such, victims place their personal tragedies into the public domain and invite society into a bigger search for seeking answers to the big why-questions to prevent future tragedies. It also forms the discipline not to give in to the enticements of dehumanising an entire community that may share some basic memberships with the actual perpetrators. To forgive is to surprise your enemy. At least, it will confuse them. It certainly can undermine the ISIS narrative of framing the conflict as Muslims fighting against the evil West.

We cannot expect the pursuit of such alternative strategies from our governments, before giving them our permission and reassurances to do so. Simultaneously, we need to demand from our governments to give us adequate time to mourn the dead. This is even more important in today's world with many people having many bloods and belongings to different places and nations across the world. Following the Twin Tower and the Paris attacks, Western citizens were deprived of going through the process of mourning and introspection and non-Western citizens from maintaining their sympathy and condolences for the West, due to Western governments declaring wars on entire regions overnight. Consequently, we all have accepted and acted out of the then al-Qaeda and now ISIS narratives.

Naturally, the way we currently define strength and weakness, or leadership, allows limited mental space to consider these alternative strategies to revenge seriously. However, a useful mantra to use against cynicism and alleged realism is the vision that there are infinite solutions to resolve conflict once adversary groups have meaningfully acknowledged their mutual grievances.

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REUTERS/ABDALRAHMAN ISMAIL

An imagined dialogue with my late friend Ed Cairns

Di: Good morning, Ed. We miss you, you know. Can you spare me a moment? I have a query here from Jon Sutton, Editor of *The Psychologist*, that I would like to discuss with you. He is concerned about the current situation, the bombings in Paris, Beirut and elsewhere and the decision in the UK to bomb Syria. He thinks that you would have something to say [see https://thepsychologist.bps.org.uk/volume-14/edition-6/war-and-peace-0], but wonders why the rest of us are silent.

Ed: This is more than one question, Di. 'Does psychology have relevance to understanding and responding to the situation?' is one. 'Why don't psychologists speak up?' is another.

Di: What about the first?

Ed: We know a great deal about structural and direct violence, we can say much about the cyclical processes that escalate conflict, and we know that the trauma of war affects both those who attack and those who are attacked. We also know quite a lot about the way young people are recruited into rebel groups and how the process may be reversed.

Di: But is peace psychology still relevant? Aren't members of ISIS so extreme that we cannot negotiate with them? Isn't this a new form of war?

Ed: History is replete with examples of extremism. The Buddhist monks who burned themselves in protest against the South Vietnamese government, the Khmer Rouge under Pol Pot, the Spanish Inquisition, Fascism in Germany, the apartheid regime in South Africa, the Klu Klux Klan in America to name a few. I am

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sure you can think of many other examples.

Di: So although the context has changed there are still continuities with the past? Psychological understandings still apply?
Ed: Yes, one of the main differences is that the violence is in our own backyard, something we understand in Northern Ireland. You Aussies go off and fight in other places and expect the war to stay 'over there'.

Di: I guess you are right about that. Is there anything we can do to improve the situation?

Ed: Well, the key to success is working together. Those of us from other faiths need to work to understand and build better relationships with Islam, so we can stand together against all forms of violence. If we focus only on ISIS and do so by means that alienate the vast majority of Muslims, we may win a battle but will certainly lose the war.

Di: What about the second question? Why are we silent?

Ed: Well, I must say the silence of the psychologists is making me cross. There are a few things in the epistemology of the discipline that contribute. One is the focus on individual psychology. Earlier psychologists, like the psychoanalysts, recognised the importance of communities and societies, but the prevailing fashion is to look at individuals as the unit of study. Having this micro focus makes it difficult to comment on global affairs. Another is the need for empirical data. Don't get me wrong, I did empirical work myself. But if we must always wait for the data to come in before warning against a course of action it may be too late to change the course of action. Also the emphasis on the present in psychology sometimes robs us of the lessons of the past. Our discipline tends to de-contextualise: it is not too surprising if we find it hard to comment on contexts.

"history is replete with examples of extremism... there is no need to give up"

Di: Another reason for silence is the close link between American psychology, which is very influential around the world, and the military. It is difficult to speak out against bombing if you are employed by the armed forces. Like other APA members (I'm an international member of APA like you were, Ed) I was shocked by the findings of the Hoffman Report (Hoffman et al., 2015), which revealed the complicity of psychologists in the development of torture techniques, but if we had stopped to look back and reflect the important role of the army in the history of psychology was there all along.

Now, you studied children. What do you think about this so-called radicalisation process where young Muslims are lured away to fight for ISIS. How can we intervene? In Australia we are planning more extreme measures like refusing re-entry to Australia even though the fighters hold Australian passports, or locking up people who are deemed to be a terrorist threat for life.

Ed: Drawing on past experience we know that punishment is not necessarily effective, that rewards are more reliable in shaping new behaviours. Do you know examples of converting militants back to functioning in civil society?
Di: Yes, there was a conversion programme in the Philippines, where rebel soldiers were re-employed into the armed forces of the government. And I know former child soldiers from African countries who are not only productive citizens in Australia, but are also becoming peace workers.

Ed: So there is no need to give up hope? There might be ways to intervene in the process that leads youngsters to take up their weapons, and to instead help reconcile them with their communities.

Di: Yes. What worries me most is the way those who protest against Islam here in Australia (they call themselves Australia First) are starting to sound like ISIS, and even to look like them, wearing combat gear and flags across their faces.

Ed: You've hit your word limit.

Di: But there is so much more to say.

Ed: So don't remain silent any more.

Diane Bretherton
University of Queensland

'The last thing we should do is send in troops'

I feel the last thing we (the US and the West) should do is send in troops, as that appears to be exactly what they are hoping for to draw us in to [see tinyurl.com/zxox8f4]. I think one of the more hopeful signs – other than the Vienna talks on Syria – is the moderate Muslim movement in Indonesia, Nahdlatul Ulama [see tinyurl.com/zzfb6r6]. The world needs resistance and push-back against violent extremism from inside Islam. It needs to offer potential recruits another equally compelling vision.

I do feel that the West should do all it can to exert pressure on the Saudis to cut funding to Wahhabism in all its manifestations. This is the source. Finally, I also think that some of Hillary Clinton's proposed policies (24-step plan) can provide more immediate responses to contain ISIL.

But ultimately, the US and the West more generally, need to learn from the six former heads of Shin Bet, the Israeli security agency, interviewed in the documentary *The Gatekeepers*. They all, to a man, come to the conclusion that the more sophisticated they get at military tactics (such as our use of drones), the farther away they move from their strategic political goals. I highly recommend this film.

Readers may also be interested in my essay on what America can do to reduce its own violent tendencies (tinyurl.com/jso9vz4], and my essay with Andrea Bartoli on dealing with extremists (www.beyondintractability.org/essay/dealing-extremists).

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In pursuit of harmonious cohesion

Political responses to the November 13th attack on Paris have been swift, dramatic and decisive. But an important question is whether these responses are proportionate, reasonable and strategically appropriate, or whether they are knee-jerk, or even politically opportunistic, reactions to momentary fluctuations in public sentiment. Research suggests that, by changing the way we view human relationships, shocking terrorist events might promote a reactionary lurch, but that reaction does not have to be an enduring one. What we all have to live with, however, are the political and policy decisions that follow.

The Syrian refugee crisis throughout 2015 clearly affected public opinion across Europe, and certainly in the UK, to become more wary and fearful about immigration. It created a climate in which border control was already becoming a significant issue. Throughout the summer a series of horrendous terror attacks orchestrated by ISIS fuelled a more retributive political rhetoric that strengthened support for nationalistic political parties. By the end of 2015 the British Parliament had approved a widening of bombing strikes to Syria (a primarily symbolic gesture of solidarity with France's 'war' on ISIS). However, in some ways there is more to learn from the UK's orientation to France than its views on ISIS.

There was a striking shift in the government's orientation to European unity. The general election campaign had been dominated by debates on immigration and border control. Heralding his strategy for renegotiations prior to the Euro referendum, on 10 November David Cameron gave a speech articulating how Britain was so different from the rest of Europe, how we had different objectives, needs and positions on many things. He stated, 'The commitment…to an ever closer union is not a commitment that should apply any longer to Britain. We do not believe in it, we do not subscribe to it.' Yet by 14 November, one day after the attacks in Paris, he was declaring to France that 'your values are our values…more than ever we should come together and stand united'.

This apparent volte-face can be readily explained by simple psychological principles. Almost all terrorist attacks are followed by shock and then a political proclamation of the defence of society's core values. Often these are framed in terms of protecting a decent society in which everyone is treated fairly and equally. Yet, in the face of a common enemy the illusion of an idealised society (one in which true, correct and pure principles are upheld) emerges through a particular form of cohesion, which can be labelled 'rivalrous cohesion' (Abrams, 2010). By focusing on a common enemy, one's group, region, nation or continent finds an empowering common focus that obliterates important differences in perspective and creates a sense of unity and consensus. This form of cohesion is essential to mobilise armies, win competitions, and so forth, but it is also potentially dangerous as a vehicle for extreme group polarisation and intensification of conflict.

What can psychology offer here? It is important to recognise that there are other forms of cohesion. Harmonious cohesion is a state in which humanitarian principles and shared valuing of all individuals predominates. This is likely to arise in societies that do not face significant economic pressures, in which there is less inequality, and when there are few or no significant external threats (Abrams & Vasiljevic, 2014). The road to harmonious cohesion is gradual and gentle, but it requires the promotion of empathy, the sharing of superordinate identities and multiple cross-cutting identities, thereby limiting simplistic categorisation of 'them and us'. Sustaining and nourishing this slow route to cohesion is hard, particularly as the route to rivalrous cohesion is potentially much faster and easier. Rivalrous cohesion is likely to be a response to uncertainty, particularly uncertainty over where threats reside, who our friends are, and so on. If we accept the argument that core psychological needs include those of belonging, meaning, control and esteem (cf. Williams, 2009) we can readily see how the threat arising from a terrorist attack elevates all of these, and how rivalrous cohesion helps to satisfy them all.

In fact, and rather strangely, even in a society where almost everyone strongly believes in equality, fairness and justice, people show both types of cohesion at the same time. When they consider non-

threatening groups such as older people, women, people with disabilities, and so forth, they adopt a 'benevolent' attitude, advocating promotion of more equality of opportunity, treatment and rights, and behaving more generously towards those groups. However, when they consider groups that potentially challenge majority values or way of life they withdraw these advantages (Abrams & Houston, 2006, Abrams et al., 2014).

Rivalrous cohesion exists and can be expressed by people on both the political right and political left (witness the infighting in the Labour Party). But reactions to terrorist events may cause a population shift to the right not just by hardening the resolve of 'hawks' but by weakening that of the 'doves' to accept the rivalrous cohesion agenda (Nail et al., 2009). This greater malleability means that doves may be engaged by rivalrous cohesion, but are likely to return to their core values. The risk is that, in the ebb and flow of political opinion, decisions are made that set a trajectory that accelerates rivalrous cohesion when that may not in fact reflect the more enduring priorities of the population.

Psychology's role in all this is to alert both the people in general but in particular those who are making critical policy judgements and decisions, and who may be responding to immediate pressure from public opinion, that there is a potential cost to pursuing rivalrous cohesion, a cost that should not be underestimated and that should be weighed carefully against the losses that may damage hard-won harmonious cohesion.

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ISIS and the law of political irony

Economist and peace and conflict scholar Kenneth Boulding used to lecture about the 'law of political irony' – Many things you do to hurt people help them, and many things you do to help people hurt them. That is exactly what is happening with ISIS. We are bombing them in an effort to weaken or, ideally, even destroy them. However, this action is actually making them stronger – and us weaker.

ISIS's worldwide terror strategy is designed to instil fear and hatred of 'the other' across the globe. And that's working – just look at the US Presidential candidate Donald Trump, and the astonishing support he is receiving for his broad anti-Muslim rhetoric, suggesting that all Muslims be at least temporarily forbidden from entering the United States. But, when we so label and lash back at 'the other' – who most often are not ISIS terrorists, but all people we fear might be such (as in all Muslims, or even all people with brown skin) – we create more animosity, fear and even hatred. That drives more people join ISIS, and the escalation spiral takes off (Pruitt et al., 2003).

No doubt, the ISIS leadership is what we call 'incorrigible' – they have an apocalyptic vision, and they can't be negotiated with using either competitive or cooperative ('win–win') negotiation. They have to be isolated, delegitimised, and disarmed.

But the vast majority of Muslims are not incorrigible. They may not share our values; we may disagree with many of their beliefs; but if we allow them to live as they choose, most of them will allow us to do the same.

ISIS can't be defeated with outsiders bombing because the 'backlash effect' will take hold – for every ISIS operative we kill, we will create several more by deeply angering people whose homes we have destroyed (Burgess et al., 2004). If we assume that all Muslims or 'brown-skinned' people are our enemies, they will, indeed, become so, as people don't usually befriend people who demonise them.

DEMOTIX/PRESS ASSOCIATION IMAGES

Kurdish protesters in London burn an ISIS flag

Many Muslims fear ISIS as much as we do, and those people are essential allies if we are to successfully fight ISIS both at home and abroad. Locals have the knowledge of who is and who isn't a threat; they have legitimacy and credibility on their home turf. We don't – we are interlopers (with a bad reputation, by the way).

In short, what ISIS is trying to do is drive an escalation/dehumanisation spiral to the point of producing a catastrophic and apocalyptic war between the West and the Islamic world. Our central objective should be preventing this strategy from working. Bombing civilians in the hope of killing a few (or even many) ISIS operatives likely will do the opposite.

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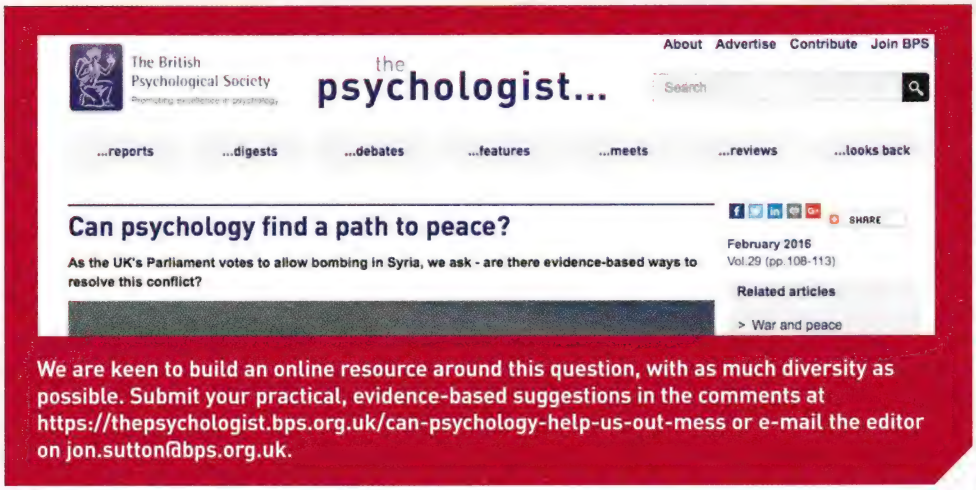

We are keen to build an online resource around this question, with as much diversity as possible. Submit your practical, evidence-based suggestions in the comments at https://thepsychologist.bps.org.uk/can-psychology-help-us-out-mess or e-mail the editor on jon.sutton@bps.org.uk.

Understanding 'identity fusion' where it matters

Can psychology contribute to tackling the root causes of violent extremism? And can it contribute something meaningful to resolving what currently seems to be an intractable conflict? I believe it can, and have been conducting research into just how. This year I've been working with cognitive scientists and anthropologists at Oxford University's Institute for Cognitive and Evolutionary Anthropology (ICEA) and the Centre for the Resolution of Intractable Conflict (CRIC) in designing and conducting science-based field studies into the mechanisms (both psychological and social) of radicalisation in the Middle East.

There is a pressing need for empirical peer-reviewed research in this area. The US and UK spend tens of billions on munitions and equipment, and yet almost nothing on scientific research to understand the phenomenon they are fighting, and which poses a grave threat to world security. In 2010 the anthropologist Scott Atran (a co-founder of CRIC) in a statement before the US Senate argued that we have no sustained, systematic scientific research that will enable us to understand the 'motivation, intent, will and the dreams' of current or would-be violent extremists (Atran, 2010). Five years on (and many atrocities since) we still have no programme of research and no coherent vision.

However, the situation is changing. The UK Ministry of Defence recently invited applications for research outfits to competitively register on their Military Strategic Effects (MSE) Framework. The MSE will commission research into what the military term Target Audience Research and Analysis, or TAA. TAA is a scientific, deductive approach to understanding the motivations, norms, values and beliefs, rituals, decision-making processes, and other psychological and social (group) features of potential 'audiences' in the fight against terrorism. The ultimate objective in conducting TAA is to gain insight into how to craft the most effective interventions to change behaviour.

Clearly psychology has a huge role to play in this. There are major academic and applied research efforts in large-scale behaviour change. Most of this research is carried out by psychologists, such as Susan Michie's team at UCL's Centre for Behaviour Change (CBC). The CBC is focused on health behaviours; and the much-publicised Behavioural Insights Team is focused on behaviour change for policy. Yet the same high-quality science that is the hub of these units can also be applied to understanding the allure and the behaviours of terrorist networks and how to design credible, evidence-based, measurable interventions to weaken them.

To that end, the MSE has just requested bids to conduct research in a Middle East country to better understand the pathways towards radicalisation, and how to develop communication interventions that might effectively influence potential recruits to choose otherwise. In writing a section of this bid on the 'psychological drivers' towards radicalisation, I was struck by the paucity of experimental and field-based scientific research into the mechanisms of radicalisation. In a comprehensive systematic review, Christmann (2012) presents several broad process theories, but there is little psychological insight into the mental and social processes that 'push' and/or 'pull' an individual further along the pathway of radicalisation. And where there is such insight the necessary empirical support is lacking.

That's why scientific field research conducted as close to terrorists as is possible is so vital. In my research I work directly with an organisation that specialises in field research in the Middle East. Although run by an Oxford-educated Arabist, the organisation employs heads of research who are trained social scientists, proficient field researchers, and themselves Muslim. Each research lead heads a team of social science researchers who are drawn from the country in which we are conducting research. These researchers administer our surveys, interview schedules and (increasingly) tablet-loaded quasi-experimental tasks in the very communities where military intelligence suggests extremists originate.

Recently, our team collected survey data from 200 males in Benghazi in an effort to better understand the processes that lead to identity fusion – tight, visceral bonds that have been shown to bind together people who have shared dysphoric experiences (e.g. Whitehouse et al., 2014). Understanding the cognitive and social processes (and the external stimuli) that trigger identity fusion is vital if we are to understand the mechanisms that bond radicalised individuals together, because evidence suggests (e.g. Christmann, 2012) that youths are drawn to extremist groups because their personal identity conflicts may be resolved by submission to a greater ideal. This kind of psychologically informed science-based research will be necessary to fully understand the radicalisation pathway, which is likely a complex interplay of personal, social and external factors.

Together with our research team in the Middle East, and backed by traditional academic and military funding, my colleagues and I at Oxford are hoping to extend this work in the near future into Yemen, Syria and Jordan. Our aim is to generate a reliable and rigorous body of empirical research that illuminates the pathways to and from violent extremism, and the psychosocial factors inherent in that transition. Success in this endeavour will require considerable resources and an interdisciplinary approach that is backed by academia, the military and Middle East partners. I feel this research is necessary, urgent and justifiable. Social scientists of all stripes can do more than mop up the mess: we may be able to lay the foundations for preventing the spilling of blood in the first place.

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There is little psychological insight into the mental and social processes that 'push' and/or 'pull' an individual further along the pathway of radicalisation

Dr Lee Rowland CPsychol
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ARTICLE

The ascension of parent–offspring ties

How are bonds between parents and their grown-up children changing, and what impact do they have? **Karen Fingerman** looks at the evidence.

Western cultures place romantic ties on a pedestal. Taxes, legal decisions, property and social life pivot around the couple. Yet, for individuals who are widowed, divorced, never married or between partners, a tie to a parent or grown child may be the primary bond. Moreover, most individuals value their intergenerational bonds, regardless of their romantic status. When researchers ask adults to name their most important social partners, people list their parents and grown children as nearly as important and in some cases, more important than a romantic partner.

In fact, the prominence of intergenerational ties appears to be on the rise, in part because fewer adults are situated in long-term romantic ties. Among young adults (aged 20 to 34) in the UK, fewer than half reside with a romantic partner, and nearly a third of adults aged 18 to 25 reside with their parents (Office for National Statistics, 2012). Thus, the primacy of intergenerational ties between young adults and their parents may be shifting. We might ask: Which features of these ties are changing? And why?

As a caveat, family researchers and the public alike tend to use the mid-20th century as the epitome of family life and evaluate current family forms against that baseline (Furstenberg, 2011). For a variety of reasons, the 1950s and 1960s are salient in societal memory. The peace of the post–World War II era permitted a focus on family, and the rise of mass media (television, magazines and radio) reflected and conveyed norms about family ties to the wider public. Throughout much of the world, a large cohort of post–World War II 'Baby Boomers' entered young adulthood. In the UK, a second baby boom occurred in the 1960s bringing attention to parenting and perhaps to autonomy from one's own parents. Finally, social scientific research hits its stride during the mid-20th century, and documented a variety of features of family life. Researchers examined intergenerational ties between adults in the 1950s and 1960s, generating a social scientific portrait of these kinship ties. A dominant paradigm – intergenerational solidarity theory – arose and endured across several decades. The basic premise of this theory is that intergenerational ties often show high cohesion, and, moreover, families that share values and affection are the most cohesive (Bengtson & Roberts, 1991). Scholars also documented markers of adulthood, including leaving the natal family, establishing a separate household, and procreating. Thus family patterns are often measured against an anchor period of the 1950s and 1960s, a period when grown children in Western cultures were expected to leave the parental home and establish autonomy by their early twenties.

Family researchers and the public alike tend to use the mid-20th century as the epitome of family life

Whether this portrait of intergenerational ties remains true is of considerable interest to scholars. Given the primacy of the parent–child tie into adulthood, psychologists may be interested in fluctuations in this tie and its implications for wellbeing. Changes in three aspects of parent–child relationships in particular warrant consideration: how the parties treat one another (e.g. their level of involvement), how they feel about one another and their relationships (e.g. affection, conflict) and the effects of the relationship on psychological wellbeing. Each of these features of intergenerational ties may have changed in recent decades in ways that are associated with each party's emotional wellbeing.

Contact and social support

In Western cultures, ties between parents and grown children are to a large extent voluntary. Historically, laws applied to this tie. For example, English Poor Law initiated the idea that grown children were liable for their elderly parents if the parents could not care for themselves. Today, some countries have laws that require grown children to support aging parents in late life (e.g. France, Poland, Singapore) as do a few states in the US, but the laws are rarely enforced. Moreover prior to old age, during midlife and young adulthood, there are few legal proscriptions or even social sanctions that

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mandate contact or support between the parties. Parents and grown children *choose* to remain frequently involved in one another's lives by maintaining contact in person, by phone and via text.

Moreover, parental involvement may spill into support for young adult children via tangible material assistance (e.g. finances or a place to live) and via non-tangible assistance (e.g. advice and emotional support). Young adults may reciprocate support to some extent, but in Western cultures, support usually flows 'downstream' from the parents to the grown children (Fingerman et al., 2011; Kohli, 1999).

Rates of contact between young adults and their parents have increased dramatically over the past few decades. Studies in US in the 21st century find that over half of young adults (55 per cent) report contact with parents – by phone, in person, by text – daily or nearly every day and another 25 per cent report contact several times a week (Arnett & Schwab, 2012; Fingerman, Cheng, Tighe et al., 2012). Similarly, data from the Netherlands revealed that nearly three quarters (72 per cent) of young people had at least weekly phone contact with parents and nearly as many saw them in person that often (Bucx et al., 2008). In the 1980s, data from a variety of sources indicated that contact between adults and parents occurred less frequently; just over half of parents reported any type of contact with a grown child once a week or more often (Fingerman, Cheng, Tighe et al., 2012).

Although frequent contact is common between adults and parents today, some adults do not have contact with their parents. Estrangement is most likely to occur for fathers who are divorced from the child's mother or who never married the child's mother. In a recent national study of adults aged 24 to 32 in the US, 20 per cent lacked a father figure or did not have contact with their father, whereas only 5 per cent of these young adults reported being estranged from, or lacking, a mother. Moreover, most grown children have contact with at least one parent; only 2 per cent of these adults were estranged from both parents (Hartnett et al., 2014).

For the most part, then, the ties appear to be robust and thriving. Increased contact between adults and parents reflects several societal trends, the most obvious being advances in communication. New technologies such as e-mail, texting and Skype make communication between parties easy, accessible and practically free. But these formats of communication have not supplanted the more pedestrian telephone and in-person contact: it's only just over a third of the time that the contact between adults and parents occurs via newer technologies.

Indeed, trends in communication pre-date the saturation of communication technologies. For example, the US showed a trend of increased contact between generations prior to widespread use of cellphones. Only 38 per cent of the US population reported using a cellphone in 2000, yet national data in the US reveals a trend of increasing contact between adults and their parents beginning in the early 1990s (Fingerman, Cheng, Tighe et al., 2012).

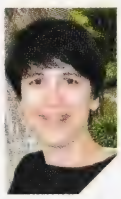
Increased contact between generations also reflects changes in the nature of young adulthood. In the 21st century, young adults spend more time in education, experience greater challenges finding jobs and delay marriage longer (if they marry at all) than was the case 30 or 40 years ago. Today, a much higher proportion of young adults attend college or another form of post–high school education than in the past (Fingerman, Cheng et al., in press; Furstenberg, 2011). Across countries, students have more frequent contact and greater involvement with their parents than non-students of similar age (Attias-Donfut & Wolff, 2000; Fingerman, Cheng, Tighe et al., 2012; Fingerman et al., 2015). Moreover, young adults who are not married have more frequent contact with their parents than young adults who are married. A prolonged period of 'singlehood' or serial relationships with different partners may raise the importance of ties to a parent during young adulthood.

Historically, adults and parents have

Meet the author

'In my first year of graduate school, a professor asked me to help interview adults of different ages. Eighty-year-olds told stories that were so interesting, I was hooked on adult development. For the next 15 years, I studied older parents and their middle-aged children as a faculty member in Human Development & Family Sciences, a multidisciplinary department including psychologists with a focus on the context of family life and development.

In 2008 my research team started a study of three-generation families that included young adult children The global recession hit within weeks of the initial data collection, and we were fortunate enough to interview all the family members again in 2013. The data from the middle-aged parents and the young adult children were intriguing. Patterns of involvement, emotional qualities of the ties, and support exchanges seemed to be sensitive to the economic and social context. It soon became clear that these parent/child ties were increasing in importance, and our research focused on the implications of the ascension of intergenerational ties from there on.'



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preferred separate living spaces. Dating back several centuries, parents and grown children resided in nearby dwellings or on a shared larger farm in separate households, but co-residence occurred when this was not possible (Furstenberg, 2011). Until the 1950s and 1960s, over one third of parents in Britain lived with a grown child (Grundy, 2005). Rates of co-residence decreased until the end of the 20th century, but have increased again over the past 15 years with nearly a third of young adults in Britain residing with their parents today (ONS, 2012). In the US in 2012, 32 per cent of women aged 18 to 31 co-resided with parents and 40 per cent of young men did (Fry, 2013). Moreover, in southern Europe, in Spain and Italy, up to 60 per cent of adults this age co-reside with parents.

Rates of co-residence decreased until the end of the 20th century, but have increased again over the past 15 years with nearly a third of young adults in Britain residing with their parents today

Cross-national differences in young adults' ability to reside separately from parents reflects several factors: (a) the availability of affordable rental housing; (b) government policies (i.e. social welfare) assisting young adults, as opposed to their depending solely on parental support; (c) long-term stable employment in young adulthood; and (d) cultural preferences for co-residence (Newman & Aptekar, 2006). The first three factors pertain to society on the whole and economic opportunities. The last factor is subjective and reflects beliefs.

Regarding structural factors, nations differ in policies that facilitate young people leaving home. In northern European countries (including Britain), government safety nets assist young adults who are pursuing education or who are unemployed. Apartments and rental housing are typically available. Southern European nations have few government assistance programmes, and rental housing is difficult to obtain. Clearly, ebbs and flows of the economy affect parent–child ties. For example, the recent Great Recession also saw an uptick in co-residence across countries, the poor economy generated fewer jobs for young adults. In addition, characteristics of the grown child predict whether they reside with a parent. Across Western countries, grown children who are unmarried, and particularly single parents, are more likely to live with their parents. Likewise, less educated and younger grown children are more likely to live with parents, as are sons compared with daughters (Dykstra et al., 2013).

Patterns of co-residence are not fully determined by structural factors, however. Research shows southern European parents and grown children indicate a preference for intergenerational co-residence (Newman & Aptekar, 2006). Studies have examined concepts such as familialism (beliefs that offspring should put family ahead of their individual preferences) and filial obligation to assist parents; cross-cultural and cross-ethnic patterns suggest that behaviours typically align with these beliefs. It is worth noting, though, that despite potential benefits of co-residence during difficult times, parents and grown children may experience ambivalence and conflicts over co-residence if autonomous households are preferred but unavailable due to economics.

Support from parents to young adult offspring also has increased over the past few decades. In Great Britain a study conducted in 1994 found that nearly three quarters of parents aged 60 to 69 reported giving practical help or money to grown children (Grundy, 2005). These parents were likely to have children who were in their thirties and forties. Parents typically give more support to younger adults (Fingerman et al., 2009) and thus, rates of support may be even higher. Indeed, a recent study in the US found that 29 per cent of parents provided several forms of support (e.g. advice, tasks, emotional support, companionship), several times a week or every day to a grown child (Fingerman, Cheng, Wesselmann et al., 2012). During the 1980s fewer than half of parents reported providing advice on a monthly basis and fewer than a third provided practical help every month. Thus, parents today provide dramatically more support

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to their grown children than they received from their own parents at a similar age. This perhaps reflects the changing economic and cultural factors described previously.

In addition, parents assist grown children today for three principal reasons: (a) the child experiences life problems or crises (e.g. unemployment, divorce, a health problem); (b) the child has potential for future success (e.g. pursuing education, raising a grandchild); or (c) during the course of everyday interactions, support occurs with or without intention (e.g. parents offer advice or emotional support during daily interactions: Fingerman et al., 2009; Fingerman et al., 2015). Moreover, when parents feel more affection for a grown child, they also provide more help (Fingerman et al., 2011). Thus, for the most part, parental support occurs in the context of strong bonds to further the child's future or because the parents and grown children enjoy one another's company.

Nonetheless, parents and children alike may experience discomfort regarding parental support. Popular media in the US refer to 'helicopter parents' who hover over their grown children, orchestrating their every move; and Danish psychologist Bent Hougaard coined the term 'curling parents' to refer to those who insist on sweeping everything that may get in the way of their child, their own polished stone. European media refer to 'Mama's boys' in Italy, and 'failed fledgling' in Britain. These disparaging terms reflect the sentiment that parental support is smothering young adults, and that dependency among grown children reflects weakness and failure. University professors tell anecdotes of parents calling to request a change in a student's grade and employers indicate that parents arrive at a child's job interview. Despite widespread stories of this type, however, such events do not seem pervasive or common occurrences.

In fact, parents and grown children alike view the new levels of parental involvement askance. In a recent study, when parents provided support to grown children several times a week, the parents and children rated that support as 'too much' (Fingerman, Cheng, Wesselmann et al., 2012). Another study examined grown children's perceptions of whether their parents provided support in a manner that was intrusive, demeaning, or that required repayment (i.e. 'help with strings attached'). When parents viewed their children as too dependent and believed the children should be more autonomous, the grown children perceived parental support as having strings attached (Fingerman et al., 2013). In other words, expectations of autonomy between generations established in the mid to late 20th century persist into the 21st century, despite common (and desired) changes in actual behaviours in the relationship.

Relationships between adults and their parents and wellbeing

Given the high involvement between adults and parents, their relationships may affect each party's wellbeing. Classic psychological theories (e.g. Freud, Erikson) argued that the initial relationship with a parent sets a course for individual differences in psychological functioning in adulthood. Subsequent empirical research has not established links between parental behaviours in preschool and adult outcomes. In fact, relationships between adults and parents may show considerable variability in quality over time. Longitudinal studies that have followed children and parents from early childhood, find continuity over short periods of time (i.e. a few years), but not from birth into adulthood (Belsky et al., 2001).

Nonetheless, qualities of the tie to parents and grown children may affect each party's wellbeing at that time. In adulthood, grown children and their parents have three types of emotional experiences in their ties: (a) positive feelings of affection; (b) conflict and negative feelings such as worry, disappointment, or irritation; and (c) ambivalent or mixed feelings. This latter category, ambivalence, is pervasive between young adults and their parents (Fingerman et al., 2004).

Young adults and their parents typically report feelings of affection for one another, particularly given the high levels of involvement and support that characterise these ties. Yet, their relationships may be complicated by the sense that the other party is intrusive or demanding, disappointing or worrisome. It is not surprising that relationships that involve such cohesion also involve negative feelings. Conflict is inherent to other close ties. After all, psychologists typically examine how marital partners resolve conflicts (rather than asking whether such conflicts exists). Nonetheless, researchers have only recently begun to examine ambivalent feelings between adults and parents.

Ambivalence may arise in part because parents find it difficult to accept societal changes that have shifted their children's timetable compared with their own young adulthood. Parents (particularly fathers) typically report ambivalence towards grown children who have not achieved markers associated with adulthood, such as completion of education, marriage and securing a job (Pillemer et al., 2012). In fact, one study found that when grown children reported that they were highly invested in their own career and their own children, their parents reported less ambivalence (Fingerman et al., 2006). In essence, even though their grown child may have less time for them, parents derive satisfaction from knowing their grown children are faring well.

For grown children, concerns about parental health remain a key issue in the experience of ambivalence, even when parents are relatively healthy (Fingerman et al., 2006). Young adults may worry about their own ability to care for parents in the future. These concerns may reflect worries about losing the parent or about caring for the parent, or may even serve as part of the recognition that parents are human and have weaknesses.

The key question remaining is whether parent–child ties affect each party's wellbeing. Parents are sensitive to their grown children's successes, but even more so their grown children's problems (Fingerman, Cheng, Birditt et al., 2012; Umberson et al., 2010). Parents report distress and poor psychological wellbeing when their children experience life crises such as a divorce, unemployment or a

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health issue. In fact, the nature of the problem does not seem to alter these effects. Parents do not appear to differentiate between problems that might be attributed to the child's lifestyle (e.g. drug addiction) and problems that seem due to outside events (e.g. victim of a crime). These patterns appear to support the truism that, 'a parent is only as happy as their least happy child' (Fingerman, Cheng, Birditt et al., 2012).

Parents may show complementary distress to a child's problems for a variety of reasons. The parent may worry about the child's future and the implications of the problem for how the child will fare in the long run. Parents also may view their grown children's success or failures as a reflection on their own job as parents. Further, parents typically step in and try to help their grown children who have problems (Fingerman et al., 2009); providing this help may be draining, particularly if the parent cannot resolve the problem. Parents also may question whether it is normal for grown children to be dependent on their parents. Parents who perceive their children as needing more help than other adults of comparable age report poorer wellbeing (Fingerman, Cheng, Wesselmann et al., 2012); it may be the case that these parents view themselves as remiss in raising children who are less competent than others of comparable age.

Moreover, relationships with children who suffer problems often become strained and involve ambivalence (Birditt et al., 2010). Poor-quality ties with grown children are associated with poorer parental mental health (Umberson et al., 2010). In fact, a recent study of parents' daily experiences with grown children found that relationship quality played a key role in daily distress. When parents experienced poorer-quality relationships with grown children, they were more likely to report that the child got on their nerves or irritated them, or that they worried or thought about problems with that child on a daily basis. These negative experiences were associated with more negative mood on that day and the following day (Fingerman, Kim et al., in press). Grown children's problems and poor-quality relationships may therefore generate a cascade of daily and long-term psychological consequences for parents.

Grown children also may be sensitive to qualities of ties with their parents, but to a lesser extent. A vast research literature shows that parents are more invested in grown children than the reverse. Parents view their children as their legacy and invest in the child for decades before the children are launched. Children, on the other hand, seek to differentiate from parents, even in an era when bonds endure and are strong. Nonetheless, grown children appear to benefit from parental involvement. When parents offer young adults support on a weekly basis or more often, the grown children report greater life satisfaction and better adjustment, controlling for factors that elicit that support (Fingerman, Cheng, Wesselmann et al., 2012). That is, if two young adults are unemployed and one receives parental support (but the other does not), the adult receiving parental support will fare better. Thus, parents have the opportunity to improve their child's wellbeing even under adverse circumstances.

'A parent is only as happy as their least happy child'

Conclusion

In the 21st century it is clear that parent–child ties typically are highly involved, functional and serve as sources of support. The research literature stemming from the 1960s has focused on generalised trends in these ties, with less research on psychological aspects of the ties beyond relationship quality and wellbeing. In early life, ties between parents and children show systematic individual differences, as evidenced by research examining attachment theory (secure, insecure, ambivalent). Likewise, the adolescence literature regarding parenting styles has shown how distinct patterns of parenting (e.g. authoritative, authoritarian) are associated with adolescent outcomes. Yet, the literature regarding adult parent–child ties has primarily examined continuous phenomena, rather than discrete categories of parent–child ties. Recent studies in the family science literature have begun to use latent class analysis to generate typologies of parent–child ties in the US, Europe and Asia, but this research is largely atheoretical. A sparse longitudinal literature following early parent–child ties into adulthood suggests only modest associations in relationship qualities, and then only over shorter periods of time. A few studies of late life have examined attachment styles in late life caregiving, but findings have been mixed. In sum, parent–child ties in adulthood warrant theoretical attention.

Likewise, the literature does not adequately reflect clinical phenomena involving adults and parents. Research consistently finds benefits for family members who receive support. When grown children incur problems, studies have documented parental empathetic distress but have not noted difficulties for the grown children stemming from parental involvement. Yet, popular media suggest parental over-involvement is detrimental. In 2011 the *Atlantic Monthly* carried a cover story written by a therapist who argued her young adult clients suffered narcissism, low confidence, and psychological maladjustment due to parental over-involvement. The factors that determine when parent–child ties are beneficial and when they are toxic warrant research attention.

In sum, ties between young adults and parents appear to be thriving. Recent trends in marital patterns suggest intergenerational ties will continue to intensify. In Great Britain in 2011 only 52 per cent of men and 49 per cent of women were married, and rates of marriage are on the decline (ONS, 2013). The likelihood of cohabitating with a partner has increased, but these ties are less stable than marital ties. Thus, increasingly, relationships with parents and children are the most important enduring ties in individuals' lives. The tendency to lose touch with a father may increase in the future as well because more children are born to mothers who have tenuous relationships with the child's father than in the past.

For individuals who have a bond to a parent, however, the ties typically are highly rewarding. Current trends of frequent contact and supportive ties may continue. Today, the downside of these ties is ambivalence associated with changing norms regarding whether it is all right to have such strong ties and for parents to continue to help grown children. But as values come to align with the presence of strong intergenerational bonds, parents and children alike may benefit.

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Imagining the impossible before breakfast

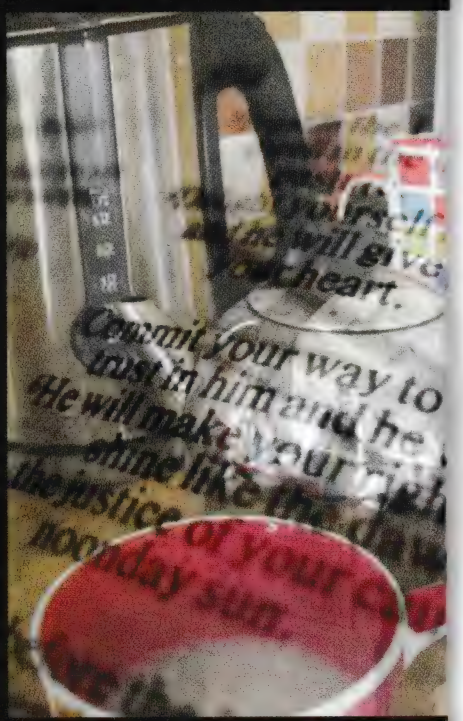
Image/words by **Jan Cosgrave** & **Dalena Van Heugten** (University of Oxford)

Dissociative symptoms include phenomena that encompass excessive daydreaming, memory problems, severe absentmindedness, and impairments and discontinuities in perceptions of the self, identity and the environment. An example would be 'zoning out' a lot, or, in more severe cases, not recognising yourself in the mirror. People scoring high on dissociation also tend to have more rapid eye movement (REM) sleep. REM is a sleep phase that has been hypothesised as an ideal state for hyperassociative connections to be made. We wished to investigate whether such connections could predict enhanced creativity during the day.

To test this, we conducted a creative photo contest where participants took one photo per day for five consecutive days, based on specific daily themes (consisting of single words). The participants also completed daily measures of dissociation and a short sleep diary.

The photos and their captions were ranked by two professional photographers and two clinical psychologists based on creativity, originality, bizarreness and quality. As predicted, we found that dissociation predicted a higher ranking on creativity when taking a photo that day.

Displayed here are the photographs for our winner in chronological order for each of the themes: three; green; freedom; desire; and home. This work has recently been published in *Frontiers in Psychology* (tinyurl.com/zjzyedz) for highlighting an innovative approach to both studying creativity and informing dissociative symptomatology.



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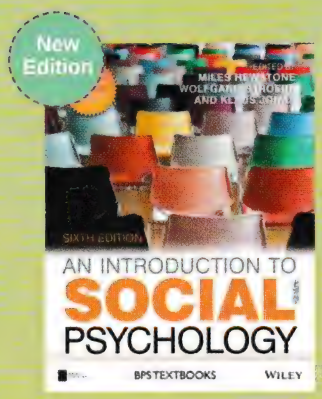

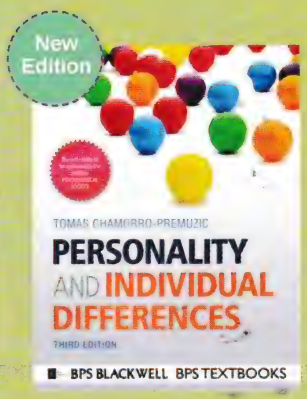

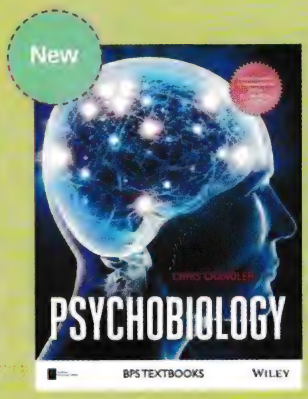

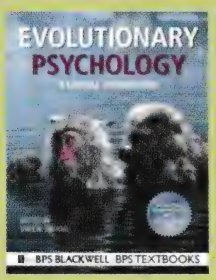

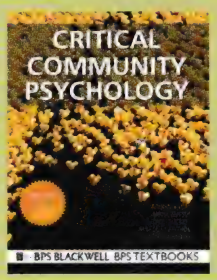

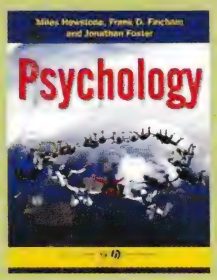

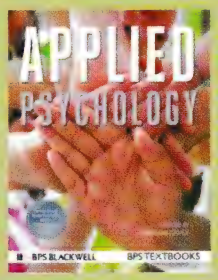

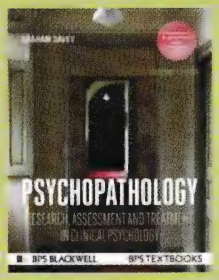

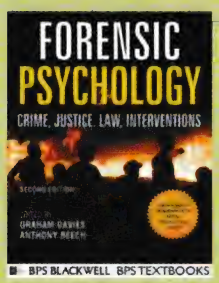

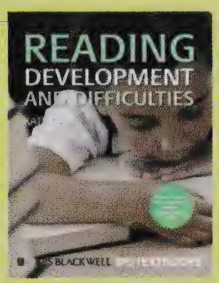

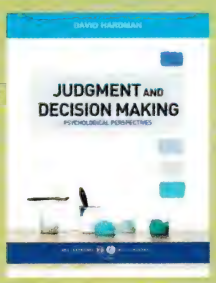

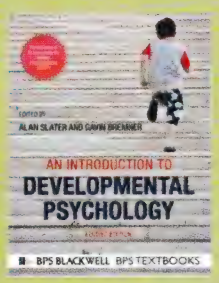

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From riots to crowd safety

In the first of an occasional series, **John Drury** describes his pathway to impact

One day, in March 1990, when I was in my first year as an undergraduate student, I heard on the radio breaking news of a huge riot taking place in London. This seemed very important for two reasons. The first reason was that politically many people seemed to think that riots were irrelevant, ineffective and even counter-productive for any cause. Yet the significance of the poll tax riot for both the anti-poll tax movement and the legitimacy of the Conservative government's 'flagship' policy soon became evident. The movement maintained its momentum and an announcement was made only a year or so later that the hated tax was to be abolished. The event therefore had a profound effect on the political landscape and certainly galvanised many of those who wanted change.

The second reason why the riot was important was that I had just been introduced to the topic of crowd behaviour on my degree course. I was in the middle of reading the relevant literature when the riot took place. In particular, I had just read Steve Reicher's paper on the St Pauls riot which was published in the *European Journal of Social Psychology* (Reicher, 1984). I loved the way that in this paper Steve not only outlined a new model in which crowd behaviour was understood as meaningful and identity-based, but also put the boot hard into those established theories that pathologised the crowd – from Le Bon's 'submergence' to Zimbardo's de-individuation theory. I remember wishing that I had written that paper. But I also felt excited by the fact that the topic of riots could be the focus of academic study.

The poll tax riot was the subject of my final-year empirical project. I wanted to emulate the St Pauls study. But after starting my PhD under Steve Reicher's supervision, the research emphasis shifted away from the limits of crowd behaviour to issues of change and empowerment, both within and beyond the crowd. On the one hand, crowds express people's social identities: the contours of crowd behaviour reflected people's identity-based understandings of self and world. This was what the St Pauls study had shown so vividly. But, on the other hand, crowd events could also alter the understandings and identities of the participants. People became empowered (or disempowered). The boundaries of the group sometimes changed. And sometime the very issue that the protest was about changed within the event – for example, from student fees to the right to protest itself. These psychological changes within an event could help explain why some crowd events changed over time – from peaceful to conflictual, for example. They also helped explain why people sometimes were transformed as individuals through their experiences in crowd events and became 'different' people.

We felt that we had some success in displacing irrationalism in the study of crowd conflict, and re-configuring the field as now part of collective action. We wanted to extend some of the ideas to another crowd domain. Paralleling the 'mob mentality' of irrationalist account of riots, notions of 'mass panic' pathologised collectivity in emergencies. And like the notion of the 'mad mob', these ideas were pervasive. We were often asked to comment on cases of 'crowd panic', but didn't yet have the systematic research evidence to substantiate the arguments we were making. Our aim therefore was to apply some of the social identity principles to the domain of mass emergency behaviour.

JOHN HARRIS/REPORTDIGITAL.CO.UK

Psychological changes within an event could help explain why some crowd events changed over time – from peaceful to conflictual, for example

An emergency plan that changed course

Our original research plan was to compare examples of two types of emergency evacuations – one in which

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the crowd 'panicked' and one in which the evacuation was orderly – and then see if social identity processes explained the difference. The hypothesis was that in the orderly crowd there was a shared identity, whereas in the 'panicking' crowd, there wasn't. However, several things occurred that changed this plan somewhat and led us into slightly unexpected directions.

First, once we started the research we struggled to find many instances of 'panic' to study. We advertised in order to recruit interviewees who had been involved in emergency evacuations. But most of them described at least some instances of cooperation and order emerging in the evacuating crowd. We couldn't find clear instances of crowd 'panic'.

Second, I discovered a rich literature on mass emergencies and alternative approaches to understanding them. Most of this literature wasn't in social psychology, but some of the ideas could be extended to develop a social psychological analysis that applied specifically to crowds. Some of the best conceptual and empirical critiques of the concept of 'panic' I read at this time were in papers by Norris Johnson, Charles Fritz and Jonathan Sime. And then, following 9/11, there emerged a powerful critical analysis of the meaning and implications of psychological vulnerability versus resilience in emergencies; the arguments of Russell Dynes, Simon Wessely and Frank Furedi were particularly inspiring. One of the exciting things about these arguments was the way they showed that notions of collective vulnerability – as in the discourse of 'mass panic' – were not simply an (incorrect) description of behaviour, but operated as the justification for policies and practices of control and coercion that could undermine 'natural' tendencies to resilience. As has been argued by discourse analysts (another early inspiration), social constructions *do* things.

There was one experience in particular that brought many of these issues together, and that was the 7 July London bombings in 2005. Chris Cocking, Steve Reicher, Andy Burton, Damian Schofield and I were presenting the research on mass emergency behaviour at the Royal Society Summer exhibition in London. On the day of the bombing, Chris and I were at Waterloo East tube station on our way to the exhibition venue. (Somewhat presciently, one of our exhibits was a simulation of an evacuation of London tube station during a fire.) Just before 9am, we were on the busy platform waiting for a train when we were evacuated. At the time, we didn't know that there had been terrorist attacks. We followed the grumbling crowd making their way out of the station, annoyed by the inconvenience. The rest of our journey across London was by foot.

Some hours later, we heard about soot-covered people emerging from tube stations and then about the deaths and injuries. As well as the shock and sadness for those who had been killed, I realised that it was important to try to look at how survivors behaved during the event. Since the crowd on the tube is one of the best examples of a crowd lacking a shared identity, then we might have expected disordered selfish behaviour as people affected by the bombing tried to evacuate. And yet our preliminary findings based on interviews with survivors of other emergencies led to a hypothesis that was actually closer to some of the ideas we developed in the collective action research: identities can change in crowds.

Soon there were many detailed reports of cooperation, orderly queuing and even self-sacrifice among survivors of the bombings that made any notion of 'mass panic' during 7 July impossible to sustain. People shared water with each other, they tied tourniquets, and they tried to support each other emotionally as well as practically. In most cases, this support took place amongst commuters who were complete strangers to each other.

When we interviewed survivors and analysed their accounts plus the huge amount of secondary data produced in the wake of the event (including quotes from witnesses in media reports, personal accounts and detailed statements in the London Assembly report), it gave support to the idea that survivors had shifted from seeing themselves simply as 'me' (in relation to other commuters) to 'us' (the group of people affected by the explosion). And this strong sense of 'we-ness' was associated with cooperation and concern for others.

The theoretical focus in the research on mass emergency behaviour then became this question of shift or change in social identities. Some crowds affected by emergencies already have one (or more) shared identities – the crowds of supporters at the Hillsborough disaster is an example. But in these cases the meaning of the 'we' seems to change, along with the boundaries. Liverpool fans we spoke to said the crowd identity was no longer a matter of team allegiance but a common 'humanity'. Other crowds, like those at transport hubs, shopping centres and so on, are what Steve Reicher has dubbed *physical* crowds (Reicher & Drury, 2011): they are simply people in the same place at the same time. But, under certain conditions, they can *become* psychological crowds ('us', 'we'), something that has a number of important implications for how one perceives and behaves towards others in the crowd. Shared understandings, trust and the motivation to help all seem to increase when this shift occurs. Of course some crowd evacuations are disorderly and characterised by individualistic behaviour, but many more exhibit this emergent sociality that serves to protect people within the crowd.

'Resilience'

So instead of 'panic' another concept and terminology was needed. 'Resilience' seemed to be a good way a way of talking about adaptive crowd behaviour in emergencies, but what did that mean in this context? In many definitions,

Meet the author

'My Impact Case Study – submitted to the British Psychological Society's portal at www.bps.org.uk/about-impact – seeks to recognise and understand collective resilience in crowds of survivors. The research covered in the case study was carried out with my colleagues Steve Reicher (University of St Andrews), Chris Cocking (Brighton University), Damian Schofield (State University of New York), Andy Burton (Nottingham Trent University), Paul Langston (University of Nottingham), David Novelli (University of Hertfordshire), and Clifford Stott (University of Leeds), and so this journey includes them too.

The Impact Case Study is concerned with the collective psychology of emergencies and disasters. My principal focus has been how these events affect (or sometimes create) crowds. In fact, it is crowds that fascinate me, and the work on emergencies and disasters was an extension of research on a different type of crowd event. Here I explain how that fascination began.'

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'resilience' means the preservation of an existing entity in the face of adversity; but the psychological crowd was created not preserved in the cases we looked at. In many definitions, 'resilience' refers to a disposition or attribute; but how could that be the case for a fleeting phenomenon like a crowd forming in an emergency?

Moreover, just as notions of psychosocial vulnerability (such as public 'panic') have been used to justify policies we might see as coercive and illegitimate – as Dynes (2003) had argued, for example – discourses of 'resilience' too have been used in various ways not all of them beneficial. Notions of resilience are evident in policies like the 'Big Society' and serve to justify cuts to services; and in the Second World War a similar notion was implied in discredited propaganda such as 'Britain can take it' [see also the forthcoming Edgar Jones 'Looking back' article on citizens at war].

But what interested me about notions of resilience when applied to 'communities' in UK policy since 9/11, including in the new civil contingencies framework, was that the approach is something of a double-edged sword for the state. On the one hand, the need for 'community resilience' is now clearly recognised, in the sense that the government acknowledges that the professional responders will not reach the emergency in time or in sufficient numbers and therefore the public must deal with the emergency themselves – at least to some degree. On the other hand, the more independent, empowered and active these 'communities' are, the more there is the possibility that they might develop in all sorts of unpredicted directions and do things the government hadn't anticipated or desired. It's also interesting to note in this context that the government's guidance on 'community resilience' (2011) lists *crowds* ('communities of circumstance') alongside geographical communities and others as types of 'community'. In a sense, therefore, the fashion for 'resilience' at the time was an opportunity to legitimise autonomous action in emergencies as a good thing, taking advantage of that double-edged sword.

Moreover, in psychology there were other ways of talking and thinking about 'resilience' (such as 'bouncing forward' instead of simply 'bouncing back'), so I chose the term, prefixed by 'collective', as a way of referring to a particular set of behaviours and perceptions in order to create a new way of talking about crowd psychology in emergencies. Thus we defined collective resilience as 'the way a shared identification allows groups [and crowds] of survivors to express solidarity and cohesion, and thereby to coordinate and draw upon collective sources of support and other practical resources, to deal with adversity' (Drury et al., 2009, p.502).

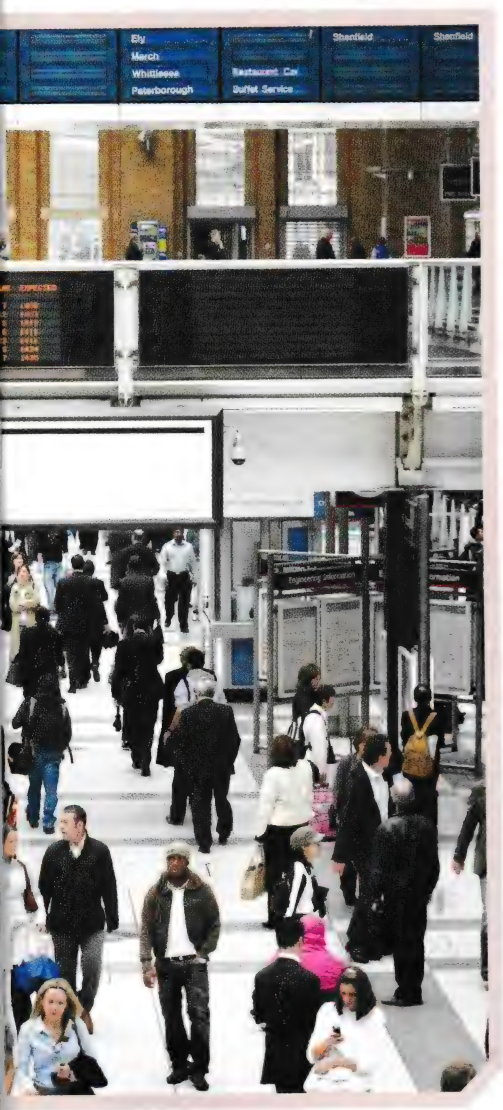
Talking to practitioners

At this point, there was another factor that went to shape the work and led indirectly to the impacts described in the case study. One of the things I liked about academia was the fact that we can study things that don't necessarily have a use. I had certainly not sought to translate the research on rebellious crowds into something 'useful'. It was important knowledge for its own sake, to my view. Yet with the research on mass emergencies there was suddenly an applied interest and a demand for the 'implications' of the work. People asked me what our findings meant for practice. Chris Cocking, who was the research fellow on the evacuations research, had a different perspective from mine: he was impatient with academia and was more interested in producing knowledge that could be used. So together we began to draw out the implications of the findings of our research for emergency preparedness and response, such as the importance of communication and trust in relations between responders and crowd.

This was at a time before the Impact agenda of both the Research Excellence Framework and the ESRC were quite as prominent as they are now, but we thought of various strategies for dissemination, the main one being an accessible free report on the research, which we distributed to over 35 organisations. Following this, I got a number of invitations to speak to practitioner events, and I found I enjoyed these. One of these invitations turned out to be significant in terms of the further development and application of the research. It was an event organised by the Joint Royal Colleges Ambulance Liaison Committee, which I hadn't heard of before, and I'm not sure how they found my name. I spoke about the London bombings research and our ideas about crowds and resilience. These interested Richard Williams who was at the event and who was working for the Department of Health Emergency Preparedness Division on the new NATO guidance on psychosocial care for people affected by emergencies and disasters. The evidence and the concepts we were developing

fitted well with the aims of the stepped model of care he was putting into the guidance, which suggested that while a minority need psychiatric care, the majority have the capacities to care for themselves and recover without expert intervention. Our work showed that group processes in *crowds* – including crowds of strangers – was key to that. The meeting was extremely fortuitous, for Richard, unusually, was a psychiatrist sympathetic to ideas in social psychology and whose specialism was in mental health strategy in emergency response. He had the interest and the vision to translate some of the social identity ideas into some of the Department of Health guidance.

Through Richard Williams and his colleague in the Department of Health, Verity Kemp, I made contact with Richard Amlôt in what was then the Health Protection Agency (now Public Health England). There was one unusual type of emergency scenario I wanted to study, and it was the same type of emergency for which PHE colleagues were seeking an



Crowds can not only respond adaptively in disasters but can actually contribute to *preventing* disasters

academic partner for research: mass decontamination of chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) incidents. The perceived threat of 'dirty bombs' from Al Qaeda meant that CBRN mass decon was a government priority at that time. Emergency procedures in such events were unlike those in any other emergency, where the public is expected simply to leave the scene, for in these events those affected needed to shower in specially designed tents to prevent the toxic agents spreading. This was obviously a very delicate operation for the fire service who would be leading the procedure, but all the research and drills had neglected the psychological side – the stress, the question of dignity, communication and the relationship between responders and public.

Richard Williams, Richard Amlôt and James Rubin (King's College London) and I designed a programme of research combining crowd behaviour hypotheses on the role of social identity with investigations into public–responder interactions. Holly Carter (PHE) was the PhD student who carried out the research. She demonstrated that communications from the responders could improve the efficiency of the decon process through legitimising the responders and enhancing identification between them and public. Through her interventions, the public became active participants in the decon process rather than passive recipients of care (Carter et al., 2015). Holly's work is now starting to transform practices not only in the Fire and Rescue Service in the UK, who are changing their training to include the role of perceived legitimacy and shared social identity – and hence emphasising 'soft skills', but also organisations in the US who manage CBRN emergency decon incidents.

Crowd safety and the future

I was encouraged by my then Head of School to run a continuing professional development (CPD) course on crowd behaviour commercially for relevant professionals. This seemed like an interesting thing to do as way of engaging with interested end-users, but there was a problem. My university (Sussex) did not award credits for the CPD I ran, which would limit its attractiveness. The resolution of this problem led indirectly to further research and further impact. I was aware that Buckinghamshire New University was running crowd safety management courses, so I approached Chris Kemp who was Dean there to see if Bucks could offer accreditation for my course. But he had a better suggestion: that I run a version of the CPD course as a module on their crowd safety management degree programme.

Running the module at Bucks on top of my Sussex duties means extra work, but has brought me into contact with many interesting people involved in crowd safety management in the live events industry. Many of these run stewarding and security companies and pass on some of the ideas from my course to the people they train themselves.

Running the Bucks course made me think more carefully about how to present the research in a way that these professionals could understand and use – something I am still working on. The first part of this 'translation' work has been to start to show how beliefs about crowd 'panic' rationalise crowd safety management practices that have been shown to produce the very anxiety and disorganisation in the crowd that the managers seek to avoid (Drury et al., 2013). The second part, more provocative, has been to show that crowd behaviour based on social identity processes can produce the crowd self-regulation, mutual social support and spontaneous coordination we gloss as 'safety' and 'resilience' (Drury et al., 2015). Put differently, the research had sought to show that crowds can not only respond adaptively in disasters but can actually contribute to *preventing* disasters when the professionals themselves are overwhelmed.

This dialogue with crowd safety professionals in the live events industry is my current focus and it is where I see the impact of this work in the future. Crowd safety managers and others are becoming more professionalised and seek accredited training. That training, and the official guidance used in the industry, is increasingly informed by scientific research. This impact work is about more than emergencies – it's also about those crowd events that pass off normally. When they manage these events, crowd safety professionals operate with beliefs about crowd psychology, even if they are not fully conscious of them. In my ongoing dialogue with these groups, my role has been to help them to reflect on their beliefs and to give them the latest research findings on how those beliefs impact on crowd behaviour.

I still think it's crucial to hold on to the idea of pure research, in these Impact-agenda driven times. I continue to do research on collective action, and currently have three PhD students working in this area: Sara Vestergren, Patricio Saavedra Morales and Atalanti Evripidou. For me, this work essentially advances theory and contributes to the accumulation of knowledge. It is part of the wider body of work that challenges pathologising accounts of collectives, but it will not be part of an Impact Case Study. (I don't get many requests from activists asking me how we can enhance crowd empowerment, but I'd be happy to try to help them if I did get such an approach!) It's important that we don't expect everyone in our Departments to produce an Impact Case Study and that we continue to value pure research. It just so happens that I've been lucky in choosing a research topic – crowds in emergencies – that has practical implications that I actually enjoy drawing out. Talking to practitioners – like the stewards at Roskilde Festival that I met last week – and seeing them get excited by the research is one of the most rewarding parts of my job.

'This is not McMindfulness'

Edo Shonin (Nottingham Trent University) talks with **Jon Kabat-Zinn**, the founder of mindfulness-based stress reduction

Why do you think mindfulness is growing in popularity within psychology?

There has been a kind of explosion of interest around mindfulness that's actually been going on for years but it's reached the point where it's kind of like – not just the big bang but the inflation of the big bang. I think there are a lot of reasons for it. One is the momentum in the science that's built up over the years around mindfulness. So if you look at the plot of the number of papers in the medical and scientific literature over the past 30–35 years, it unfolds at a very low level during the 80s and right into the late 90s. And then it starts to rise and through the early 2000s, it went higher and higher and now it's almost going straight up so that [there were] over 700 papers in 2014 alone on mindfulness, and that's not counting some of the kind of mindfulness approaches like ACT and DBT.

That's one thing that's driving it. Another is that the media has gotten a hold of it in a way where, you know, my work was the cover story of *Time* magazine in February of 2014. Then there was CBS [news] *60 minutes* with Anderson Cooper who did this thing in December. And so in 2015, Oprah Winfrey did an hour's conversation on her big programme with me about mindfulness. You know many of the people see these things in the United States and that drives it. Even internationally, I have just spent a number of days giving talks… Amsterdam was like sold out at 950 people, Belgium was sold out at 1500 people. Paris was sold out at 1700 people … and tomorrow night in London will be sold out too.

You have defined mindfulness using words such as 'non-judgemental moment-to-moment awareness'. What exactly does this statement mean?

First of all let me simply say that we get almost no training in our education around awareness at all… It is in some sense trivialised and ignored how powerful the human faculty for awareness is. So what meditation practice in general does and mindfulness specifically is to intentionally cultivate access to awareness, intimacy with awareness. It is not that we have to set up awareness, it is actually already fully developed. What we need to develop is moment-to-moment access to it.

Why moment-to-moment? Well that's really the only moment we are ever alive. But when we fall into extremes of thinking and emotion and so forth, then often we are not in the present moment any more… As children we naturally have the present moment but our education system in some sense squeezes that out of us in ways that are I think becoming apparent, and the consequences – the very unwise consequences of it or damaging consequences of it – are becoming much better known now. So mindfulness in education and especially even in kindergarten and first grade and so forth, in primary schools, is becoming a major new vector of mindfulness in the mainstream world now.

> "[Mindfulness] is a way of being, but it requires practice"

I wanted to ask about the term 'non-judgemental'. Don't you think it is necessary to make some sort of a judgement call to be able to discriminate that which is right and that which is wrong?

That definition that you are asking me about is actually what I call an operational definition. It is not meant to be a final definition of mindfulness. It is more like a working definition of mindfulness. I don't know if you know anything about the Zen tradition [of Buddhism], but it's meant to be something of a koan – a deep question that is not completely amenable to a totally cognitive response. What the non-judgemental is pointing to is actually how judgemental we are. So you could think of it as an invitation to suspend judging as much as we can and just be aware of what is unfolding from moment to moment… I am also making a big distinction between judging, which, in the way I am using the term, has to do with black-and-white thinking – I like this and I don't like that, that's good, this is bad – and discernment, which is what you are talking about, which is more the kind of operation of wisdom where you can see the subtleties… the thousand shades of grey between black and white, which is absolutely essential to and part and parcel of the cultivation of mindfulness.

If you read that definition and you don't know anything about it, you might ask well why the hell would anybody want to do that – 'pay attention on purpose in the present moment non-judgementally'? And you will notice in the definition I don't give a reason for why one would do that. Again that's part of the koan, in some sense it's part of what's left unspoken which has a real depth to it. But you could say, if you wanted a reason for doing it, it's in the service of self-understanding and the cultivation of wisdom and compassion.

Would you say mindfulness – in the manner that you teach it – is a spiritual or a psychological faculty?

Neither, just to be as provocative as possible. First of all, I really try to stay as far away from the word *spiritual* as possible. But what I will say is that if push comes to shove, my working definition of spiritual is what it means to be really human, which would be another koan because different people would say different things about that. But if I call mindfulness a spiritual practice, then of course there will be people that think that's wonderful and there will be an equal number of people, or ten times as many people, that think well that's kind of religion, voodoo, really it's nonsense, and they won't want to have anything to do with it.

I understand that while teaching it you might not want to use the word *spiritual*. But you personally, what do you think?

Here I have to say I am not a psychologist by training and I have never thought of what I do as a psychological intervention. I use a different terminology. So I would call it a mind–body intervention. We sometimes call the field that's developed around this mind–body medicine. In other words, the recognition that the mind and the body are not two different things.

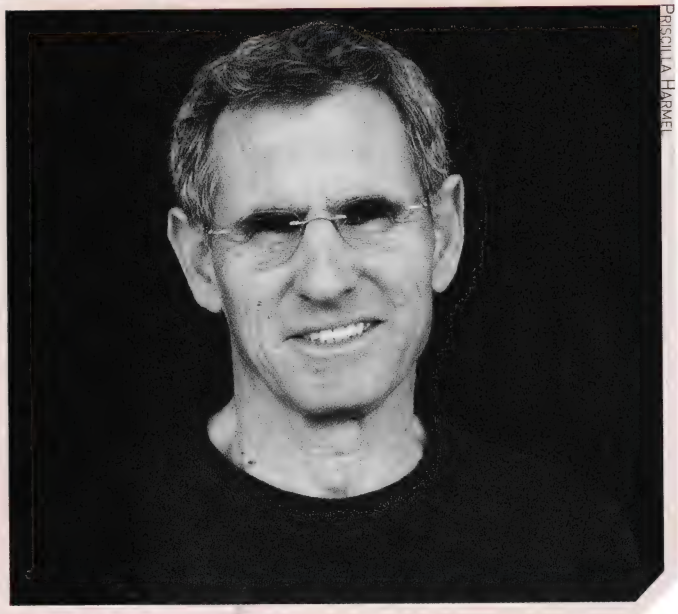
In what ways do you think mindfulness as a taught programme, such as MBSR and MBCT, differs from the traditional Buddhist approach to teaching mindfulness?

It partly depends on the quality of the teacher. If an instructor is well grounded in the meditation practices that underlie MBSR and MBCT then the essential difference might be zero. What is taught in Buddhist monasteries and what is practiced in Buddhist monasteries is essentially no different from what is taught in MBSR and MBCT – in the sense that one has an ethical foundation to the whole thing. In our case it is the Hippocratic Oath – first do no harm. And of course how would you know if you are doing harm unless you are cultivating mindfulness? And then, you know, it really is about the nature of the mind and the nature of what we call the self – and that's what Buddhist practice is all about.

Some Buddhist teachers and scholars have criticised the popular mindfulness movement and implied that what is being taught no longer reflects the traditional meaning of mindfulness or *Sati*. In fact, in some papers we find the term 'McMindfulness' popping up. What are your views on this?

First of all, that term first came out of one person's mouth or one person's mind. When you say it is popping up, of course, every term like that tends to just go viral on the web, but it just came out of one person's mind. This is not McMindfulness by any stretch of the imagination. What it is – now I have to use some Buddhist terminology – it is the movement of the Dharma [the Buddhist teachings] into the mainstream of society. Buddhism really is about the Dharma – it's about the teachings of the Buddha. You know, in various Buddhist traditions, there are actually very big differences among Buddhists about what it is all about and what the best methodologies are and all of that stuff. So Buddhist scholars love to, you know, stew with each other about the nature of all of those questions. And now that this is moving into the mainstream, I think instead of seeing that it has the potential to actually elevate humanity in profound ways that are just completely in accordance with the fundamental teachings of the Buddha about the nature of suffering and the possibility of the sort of transformation and liberation from suffering, they get into, kind of, what I might call orthodoxies that allow them to continue to throw grenades at something that is at least 99 per cent healthy for people.

Today mindfulness is described as a form of meditation in and of itself, but in the Buddhist canonical literature, mindfulness is described as a factor that regulates concentration – that is, it is not actually a form of meditation. What are your thoughts on this?



PRISCILLA HARMEL

I think different traditions describe it differently. When I developed the language to describe what it is that I do – what i call mindfulness-based stress reduction or MBSR – there is no question it's mindfulness. It's often spoken of in the Theravada [Buddhist] tradition at least as the heart of Buddhist meditation.

There was a monk in Sri Lanka named Nyanaponika Thera who was actually a German who spent his entire adult life in Sri Lanka as a Theravadan monk, and he wrote a book called the *Heart of Buddhist Meditation*. It came out in 1962, and I quote from it in my books; and in that book it describes mindfulness as the heart of meditation, that's what the book is about and the satipatthana sutta.

So you see I didn't make up the idea that there is such a thing as mindfulness meditation. It is very much the case in the Theravadan tradition that it is seen that way. In the Vajrayana [Buddhist] tradition and in the Chan [Buddhist] tradition they don't use that kind of language, but, you know, they also don't necessarily refer to the Abhidharma understanding of mindfulness.

So yes, in the Abhidharma mindfulness is a factor – it is one of the seven factors of enlightenment. But I am also using the word, just so you know, as a kind of umbrella term for the Dharma in some much larger and more universal sense. Not just as my working definition.

A newspaper has described you as having done more to bring Buddhism into the mainstream than any other individual. Do you think this is an accurate statement and do you think this is a wise move?

The Guardian got it wrong. I remember that headline. If they had used the word Dharma, then I wouldn't have an argument with it – the Dharma in its most universal form. But I was not happy with that headline at all, it is just not true. And just to say the Buddha was not Buddhist. This has never been about Buddhism *per se* as an 'ism'. The word Buddhism was coined by Europeans in about the 17th or 18th century, according to some scholars. So even the terminology sometimes creates a separation and orthodoxies that don't actually exist.

Do you have any advice for psychologists wishing to use mindfulness in applied settings – such as in clinical contexts or with children, offenders, and so on?

I do have advice for them. I guess the most fundamental thing would be that mindfulness is not a concept, it is not a good idea, it is not a philosophy, and it's not a catechism. It is a way of being but it requires practice. My strongest advice would be to actually practise it for an extended period of time and then applications for particular areas of psychology that are interested will become in some sense obvious – and from a very profound place of interest. And then they can change the field of psychology. At least I hope they will.

For much more on mindfulness, see https://thepsychologist.bps.org.uk/mindful-moment

Researching loyalist communities

Patrick Flack outlines his research in Northern Ireland in the latest in our series for budding writers (see www.bps.org.uk/newvoices for more information)

Despite experiencing a sustained period of peace since the end of violent conflict, Belfast remains a divided city, particularly in working-class areas. Protestant/loyalist and Catholic/republican communities occupy their own areas marked out by flags, murals and graffiti. The general consensus has been that segregation in general has increased through time in a 'ratchet effect', with large increases particularly after outbreaks of violent conflict, yet little or no decrease when violence declines (Shuttleworth et al., 2004; tinyurl.com/jyd8dzt). Due to the lack of contact and continued suspicion of the 'other', homogeneous communities perceive real and symbolic threats from their segregated counterparts.

It is partly as a result of this perceived threat that, despite decommissioning weapons in 2009/2010 and calling a ceasefire over 20 years ago, paramilitary organisations continue to exist. Paramilitaries often manipulate fear within their respective communities, leading that community to demand protection from paramilitaries. News reports still claim that paramilitaries bid to control working-class communities and often take the law into their own hands by carrying out 'punishment-style' attacks (Kilpatrick, 2014). In February 2014 a 'Join the UDA' mural appeared in a loyalist part of County Antrim (tinyurl.com/pgexrqp). Reed (2011) notes that loyalist paramilitary organisations still retain a presence in Protestant working-class areas 'that is unlikely to wane rapidly' (p.46).

The main justification for the existence of the paramilitaries – organised armed conflict – has ceased, so why do they still eke out an existence? Very little psychological research has been carried out into loyalist paramilitaries or the loyalist community in general: interested academics have instead largely originated from sociology, politics, history and criminology. In addition, relevant research has mainly focused on the republican community, for a variety of reasons, such as its increased willingness to engage with researchers and the greater interest shown in the republican story due to 'romantic' storytelling (see tinyurl.com/hpuzvue).

With the exception of recent work by Professor Neil Ferguson and colleagues (Ferguson et al., 2015), there has been little social psychological research into post-conflict loyalism. However, researchers from other disciplines have identified the positive changes that loyalist paramilitary leaders are trying to bring about within their organisations (e.g. Shirlow, 2012). These changes have involved 'demilitarising' their organisations in order to adopt a more community-centred role, whereby loyalist ex-combatants are developed into what Habermas (1992) called 'responsible participants' and are involved in various conflict-transformation initiatives. These initiatives have involved former loyalist combatants developing cross-community groups to prevent interface violence and working with republicans to promote shared history (Shirlow, 2012). These 'progressive elements' of paramilitary organisations have been differentiated from 'regressive elements' which are reluctant to adopt a peaceful and positive role in society. Yet when people outside the loyalist community think about this group of people, they are invariably reminded of the negative aspects that are espoused repeatedly by the media: violent protests (McKittrick, 2013), drug trafficking (Kearney, 2014) and racist crime (McDonald, 2014).

Indeed, the views of media commentators in Northern Ireland and the opinions of the general public as expressed in radio and TV phone-ins would suggest that almost everyone opposes paramilitary organisations and sees no justified reason for their existence. This widely shared societal norm helps explain why some communities prefer to stay quiet. It would be wrong to claim that a significant number of people from working-class communities support paramilitaries; however, their relationship with – and attitudes to – paramilitaries are complex and nuanced. If a community member vehemently opposed paramilitaries, they would be conforming to the overarching societal norm, but would be undermining the authority of the particular organisation that 'operates' in their area. Conversely, if a community member were to show any level of support or acceptance of paramilitaries, they could be viewed by others (mostly those outside of their community) as fuelling the continued existence of paramilitary organisations.

Despite their still visible presence in working-class communities throughout Northern Ireland – through the continued display of paramilitary murals and flags – I suspect that people who live in communities that have a meaningful paramilitary presence are conditioned not to think about them. This reluctance among sections of the working-class community to talk about paramilitaries

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leads to stumbling blocks in my research, as one of the studies carried out for my PhD project involved doing exactly that – speaking to members of the Protestant working-class community in order to elicit their views on loyalist paramilitary organisations.

When I got to know and listen to members of working-class communities in Belfast, it was sometimes hard to criticise their tacit acceptance, and at times explicit support, of these organisations. The loyalist community speak in contradictory ways about loyalist paramilitary organisations, often beginning their accounts by stating how they are opposed to paramilitary presence in their area and feel that they only serve malevolent purposes. However, these negative accounts of paramilitaries are often juxtaposed with justifications for their continued existence. For example, when speaking with a group of young adults, one member of the group began by saying, 'Paramilitaries don't serve any purpose here, all they are interested in is dealing drugs and making money.' However, later on in the focus group, the same participant stated, 'If these organisations didn't exist, all the local hooligans would be running riot, thinking they run the place.' I have found that these contradictory accounts are common as individuals strive to make sense of these groups.

Negative accounts of paramilitaries are often juxtaposed with justifications for their continued existence

So why working-class communities in particular? The rhetorical contexts in which the loyalist community justifies the existence of paramilitaries simply would not feature for individuals living in more affluent areas. The lack of social order that working-class community members cite as a potential consequence of an absence of paramilitary presence – drug-dealing, joyriding and burglary, etc. – is an issue far removed from the leafy suburbs of middle-class Belfast. Also, working-class communities in Northern Ireland – on both sides of the political divide – generally do not have a good relationship with the police service. This is partly due to the legacy of the Troubles, when police officers moved away from these communities and residents became disengaged and lacked identification with the police (Byrne & Monaghan, 2008).

Many loyalists are also aggrieved by what they perceive as 'political policing', viewing the handling of loyalist parades and protests as uncompromising and threatening.

Despite acknowledging the nefarious activities that loyalist paramilitary organisations have been involved in, the loyalist community regularly cite the basic human needs of security and safety as justification for the existence of these groups. It is hard to argue with these accounts; however, this discourse reveals a lot about the mentality that exists within these communities. It would appear that individuals residing in loyalist areas perceive a significant portion of their community as incapable of restraining their emotions and actions in the absence of paramilitary jurisdiction. Loyalist paramilitaries have maintained a presence in some Protestant working-class areas for over 45 years, so the attitude that these organisations keep an unrestrained mob of hooligans at bay can be summed up by the idiom, 'better the devil you know'. Some community members have become accustomed to the presence of paramilitaries, and some say that they don't even notice it – so why take the risk of calling for the removal of paramilitaries?

Although recruiting participants for these focus groups was extremely laborious, I learnt a number of techniques along the way that made the process easier; these approaches could help other budding psychologists who are also researching 'hard to reach' populations. Within 'hard to reach' groups, a victim mentality often exists. This mentality is particularly prevalent within the loyalist community in Northern Ireland, whereby they often feel as though they have lost out in the peace process. This loss is perceived as zero-sum – with every loyalist loss being associated with republican gain. Effective consideration and negotiation of this victim mentality can prove beneficial for the research process. There is a perception amongst the loyalist community that they 'don't have a voice'; members of this community feel that this is due to being stereotyped as uneducated bigots and not being represented by mainstream unionist politicians. In the early stages of my research, loyalist community members were unsurprisingly reticent about participating, generally appearing suspicious and apprehensive of my research agenda. However, potential participants seemed more enthused when I negotiated their victim mentality and associated perceptions. None of this negotiation involved dishonesty – I merely highlighted aspects of the research that would resonate with the target population. An example of a statement provided was 'This research allows loyalist community members to have their say and be given a voice'. One of the reasons why 'hard to reach' populations remain as such for so long is that they are often misunderstood, and their reluctance to take part in valuable research only fuels their ostracism. Although loyalism has received mostly negative attention recently, its positive aspects cannot be protected and promoted if the community is not willing to explain this to outsiders. By shutting themselves off to people who have a genuine and honest interest, community members merely confirm negative connotations of loyalism.

Despite this community's association with xenophobia and violence, the contradictory ways in which community members talk about paramilitary organisations reveal at least a modicum of potential for positive change. This can only be realised when there is a meaningful mobilisation of people who are prepared to oppose those who wish to return to conflict. If this community's collective feeling of victimisation and threat can be effectively quelled, disruptive elements who repeatedly make headlines could effectively 'lie low' and, to quote a phrase that was repeatedly used by focus group participants, 'get on with their lives'.

Patrick Flack *is a PhD student at Queen's University Belfast*
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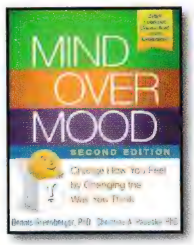

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The Society's Annual General Meeting will be held at 17.10 on **Wednesday 27 April 2016** at the **East Midlands Conference Centre, Nottingham**.

The Open Meeting will commence immediately after the AGM.

Please submit questions for the Open Meeting in writing addressed to the Honorary General Secretary by Monday 7 March 2016.
Email: CE@bps.org.uk

Dr Carole Allan
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The British Psychological Society
Research Board

Lifetime Achievement Award

The Research Board is delighted to call for nominations for the Lifetime Achievement Award. This award recognises distinctive and exemplary contributions to psychological knowledge. The recipient of the 2015 award was Professor Glyn Humphreys.

Eligibility: Academics and researchers, including those in retirement, in any area of psychology. Nominees need not be members of the Society but they must be resident in the UK. It is expected that award winners will not only have an outstanding record of personal achievements but will have also made significant contributions to the advancement of psychological knowledge; contributions to the work of the Society would also be considered appropriate in this instance.

Nominations should include:

- A statement, up to 2000 words in length, detailing the nominee's achievements and the grounds for nomination.
- A full CV
- The names and addresses of three potential referees (to include a least one current/former colleague of the nominee, who may be an employer such as a Head of Department, Dean etc.)
- Any other relevant supporting documentary evidence (e.g. published articles, books etc.)

The Award will confer:

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Further details can be obtained from Liz Beech (liz.beech@bps.org.uk)

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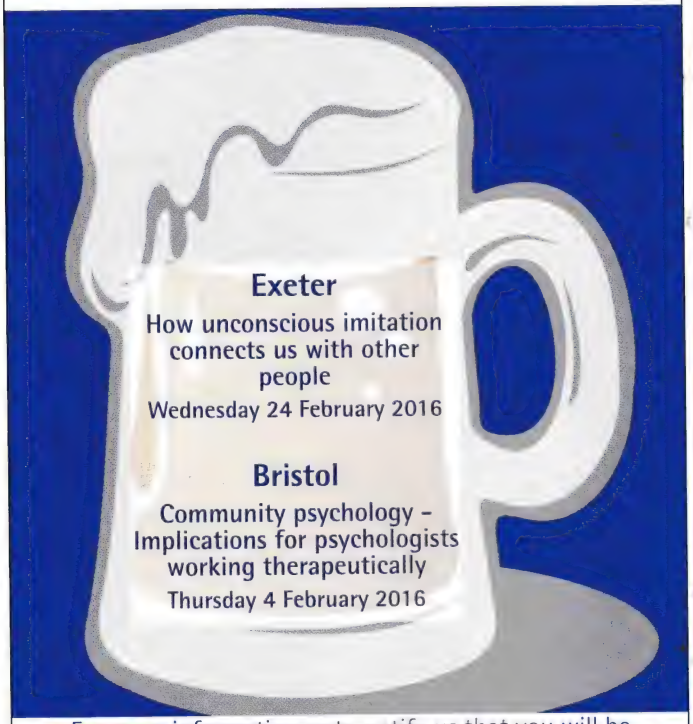

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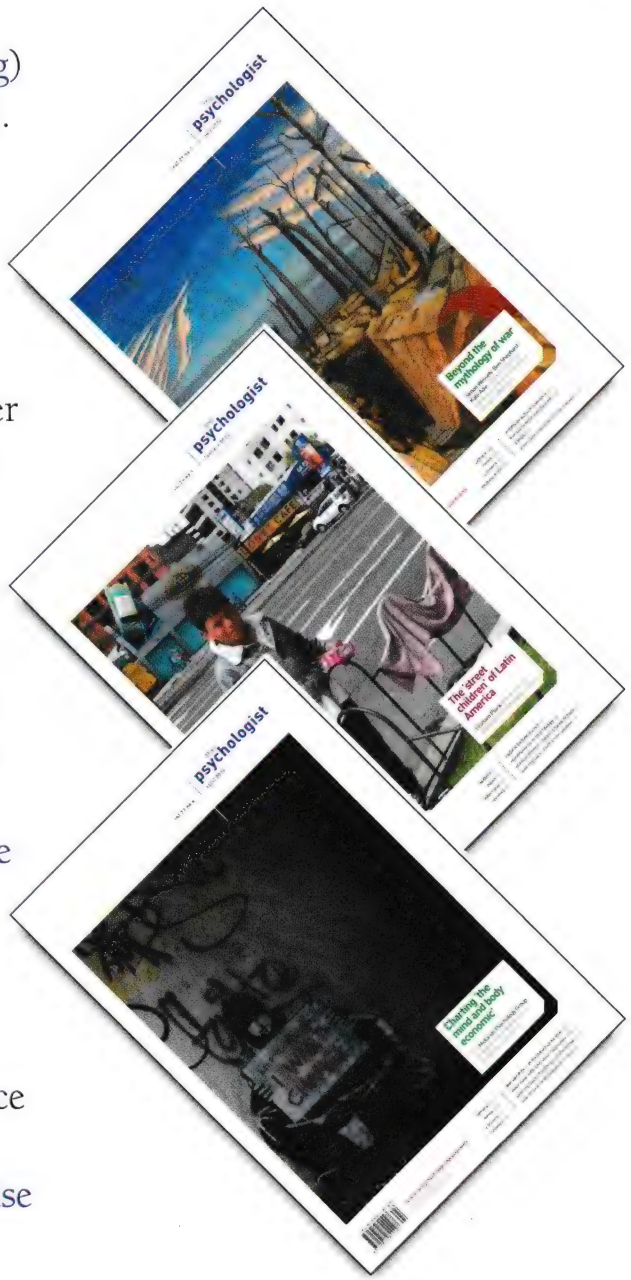

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THE PRESIDENTS' AWARD FOR DISTINGUISHED CONTRIBUTIONS TO PSYCHOLOGICAL KNOWLEDGE 2016

Members of the Society are invited to submit nominations for the Presidents' Award for Distinguished Contributions to Psychological Knowledge.

The Presidents' Award is given to candidates normally resident in the United Kingdom as a mid-career award. It is intended as a timely acknowledgement of the achievements of those who are currently engaged in research of outstanding quality.

Grounds for proposing the candidate should be fully stated by the proposer, but a full CV need not be included. This may be requested by the Research Board once a shortlist of possible recipients has been agreed by the Board.

The Presidents' Award carries with it Life Membership of the Society and recipients are invited to address the Society at its Annual Conference.

Professor Matthew Lambon Ralph was the recipient of the Presidents' Award for Distinguished Contributions to Psychological Knowledge 2014.

Nominations should be sent to the Chair of the Research Board c/o Liz Beech at the Society' office to arrive no later than **29 April 2016**.

Further details, including the criteria can be obtained from Liz Beech (liz.beech@bps.org.uk)

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'Look for small increments of change, not cures'

Nick Maguire (University of Southampton) talks to Ian Florance

Dr Nick Maguire's research profile on the University of Southampton website begins 'My main research activity reflects my clinical interest in the mental health issues implicated in homelessness'. How can research underpin psychological practice in real-life areas? Nick offers compelling answers to this question and paints an exciting view of psychology's future.

He begins by admitting 'I probably wouldn't get in to study psychology now. The quality of students has gone up and it's a much stronger discipline.' Yet back in 1992 Nick was accepted onto the course at Southampton. 'My dad was an engineer and science has always been important to me. I was originally interested in chemical engineering but was something of an academic failure, and starting to work with people interested me in psychology over time. I left sixth-form college with just a couple of poor A-levels but did evening classes.'

Nick knew very early on that he wanted to qualify as a clinical psychologist, 'though I had no idea how difficult it would be'. He worked in the NHS after graduating then applied for a clinical course.

'Doing Sociology and Psychology A-levels at evening class made me realise there are many different ways of approaching a problem. That helped me hugely at university, where it was writ large that there was no one right way of approaching a psychological issue. I think that's one of the strengths of our training – at an undergraduate level you're taught to think critically and scientifically and later you're made aware of meta-cognitive issues. Only a few other disciplines, such as sociology, do this.' I've noticed that many employers of first degree psychologists in non-psychological jobs comment on this ability as one of newly graduated psychologists' key skills.

What other areas influenced Nick? 'I thought a lot more about serious mental health issues – my thesis was on psychosis and paranoia. I was and still am an empiricist at heart, so when I trained I wasn't too impressed with people at the time practising psychoanalytic approaches. They seemed to be making empirically unsupported assertions. I think that situation has changed recently, and there's good research looking at their effectiveness.'

Psychology needs to democratise

'I always wanted to be a practitioner and, although I work in a university, I don't see myself as a full academic. I bring a research base to practical problems. I do some management work at the university and clinical training informs that – management seems often to be about engaging people in the process of change and that is a basis of much clinical client work. I find the simple Prochaska and DiClemente model of change very useful in my work.'

Nick believes psychology has a central role in reaching out to excluded groups. 'That is a significant strength of our discipline. My interest is focused on homeless people but increasingly we are drawn to other marginalised groups – some ethnic minorities, vulnerable migrants, sex workers, travellers – groups which themselves overlap. All of us fluctuate, go up and down, experience mood swings and sometimes more serious mental phenomena. But some of us get access to mental health professionals and some don't. As a discipline we need to stretch what we do and where and how we do it, and, in that sense, psychology needs to democratise.'

Nick's therapeutic interests are in CBT and DBT. 'They are based on empirical, commonsense theories and you can get them across to people easily. If you're going to help people address significant issues in their lives you have to provide them with tools they can learn quickly and which have an effect. CBT and DBT

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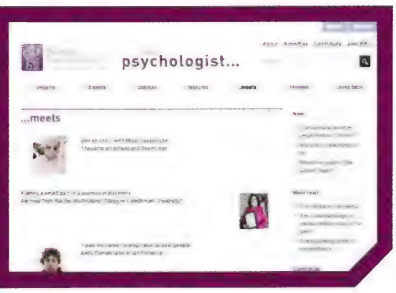

to some extent work in this way. They're clear about how change takes place and enable people to make those changes.'

Fail better

Nick tells me that there are 40,000 homeless people in UK hostels. 'More money became available for this issue in the early 2000s when the Labour government pledged to reduce homelessness by two thirds. A local charity, the Society of St James, got funding for a four-bedroom hostel and needed CBT help. I got involved and found that I was seeing the same problems in homelessness as those clients I was seeing when working in a community mental health team. It was clear that psychology's urgent role in this area was to deal with issues which led to antisocial or asocial behaviours, which in turn led to eviction – drug taking and drinking for instance. Hostels have to have risk protocols that identify behaviour requiring eviction. That's understandable for staff and client safety, but you also have to understand that risk protocols are a component in the problem of homelessness. The key is to help people formulate an understanding of why they've done what they've done – a central tenet of clinical psychology.'

Nick gives an example of a drinker who may have very low motivation to give up. 'He might say "My dad was a drinker, I'm a drinker. I'm never giving up." By working with him you find that it's a feeling of unfairness that causes him to switch from strong lager – which is his usual drink – to spirits, which are more likely to reduce cognitive functioning and increase likelihood of antisocial behaviour and lead to eviction. The issue then is to get someone in this position to commit to drinking spirits less. There's no cure involved here. I often tell students that if you try to work to a curative model you'll burn out in a few years. You look for small increments of change, not cures. And success, however that's defined, is great when it comes. But the key is to fail better.'

Towards the end of our conversation Nick mused, 'The further I go into this, the more I work with, among others, the homeless, the more I realise that an evolutionary attachment model is key to understanding damaging behaviours. You can see a link between attachment processes, abuse, problems with emotional regulation and how this leads to destructive behaviours. We have a lot of data on this and hope to write it up when I have more time.'

Nick returned to his view of psychology's future as a means of including those who are excluded. 'Psychology is moving away from primary care – issues like mild to moderate anxiety and depression are being dealt with adequately by IAPT. Psychology should be looking for new methods delivered in new ways to new populations in new environments. We need to be engaging excluded populations, such as people who are homeless, more proactively, for example using more imaginative communication methods than letters, and working where clients are, not just in NHS clinics. Our services should be as flexible as possible, delivered where people live or go, such as hostels or day centres.'

But he's still very firmly an empiricist and demands evidence of efficacy. 'I do a lot of work in this area with charities and also with commissioners. I'd like to see commissioners increasing their evidence base. I expect to be asked for evidence when I propose a programme or intervention. If I'm not asked for empirical evidence I wonder on what basis the decision is being made and whether we're using other people's money well.'

His future follows on from these concerns. 'I want to serve this population better so my goal is to set up a Centre of Homelessness Research. Not for its own sake but so it can inform practice. I aim to use university resources and knowledge to serve client needs. Research in whatever form and practice should always go together.'

The many faces of working with visible difference

Isabelle Cullis, Changing Faces Practitioner, Salisbury District Hospital

> Probably never before has dissatisfaction with the body been so widespread, because we are bombarded with hints as to how we should look and inevitably will fall short. (McCrea, 1984)

When I saw the Changing Faces Practitioner role at Salisbury District Hospital advertised on NHS Jobs, I was enthusiastic to find out more. I was aware of the amazing work that Changing Faces, a registered charity, do to support people with visible differences along with other charities, such as the Katie Piper Foundation. More than a million people in the UK have conditions, scars or marks that affect their face or body. Changing Faces is the leading UK charity supporting and representing these individuals and their families (Partridge, 1990; and tinyurl.com/pvelqhv).

The Changing Faces Practitioner (CFP) role was developed to provide psychosocial support to children, adults and families struggling with appearance concern as a result of having a 'visible difference'. The practitioners base the foundation of their work on a psychosocial model developed by Changing Faces from previous academic and clinical research (Rumsey & Harcourt, 2004; Rumsey & Harcourt, 2012). The FACES package stands for Finding out, Attitude building, Coping with feelings, Exchanging and Social skills. It incorporates the use of cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) and social interaction skills training (SIST) to help improve mood, self-esteem and confidence but additionally to manage social situations and the reactions of other people.

Historically the current site of Salisbury District Hospital was called Odstock Hospital. Built by the US Army in 1942 as a centre for dealing with wounded servicemen from the D-Day landings, it was transferred to Salisbury Health Authority after the war, and became renowned for its pioneering work in plastic surgery and burns rehabilitation. Today the hospital has a large Maxillofacial and Plastic Surgery Department, Burns Unit, Laser Centre and Dermatology Department as well as many other services that patients with visible differences might access. Therefore, it is an apt setting for a new CFP role and it was the lead consultant in maxillofacial surgery that recognised there was a need for psychological support for these patients. I did experience some initial trepidation about establishing a CFP role amongst services that had never had access to psychology before. My concerns were unfounded as everyone was extremely welcoming and positive about the benefits the role may have for their services.

There are now eight other CFP roles in place across the UK, three of which are in NHS settings. Each practitioner has come from a different background (e.g. nursing, social work) and employs the skills they have acquired to form their own unique way of working. We all meet for supervision and continuing professional development sessions in varying geographical locations, this time together proving invaluable and allowing us to lend our different experiences to learn and develop as practitioners.

My background is in CBT, having worked previously in the local IAPT service. I had also worked as an Assistant Psychologist at Salisbury District Hospital so had some experience of working within a physical health setting.

The position in Salisbury is funded for three years, partly by the Stars Appeal (the hospital's main charity) and partly by Changing Faces. Some of my new colleagues had ideas of how the position might work within the hospital, but I was given a huge amount of autonomy in shaping and moulding the role in a way that I felt would suit the services and patients who access them. This I found to be hugely exciting but also daunting. I attribute this to the level of personal responsibility I felt, for the position to be a success and the pressure to 'prove my worth' in order to secure further funding (a feeling which I feel may resonate for many psychologists working within the current NHS climate!). More and more positions are being funded by external charities, and it is the clinician's responsibility to demonstrate their value and need often in a short space of time. Furthermore, this is sometimes with minimal guidance as charities can be new to managing clinical roles and have less experience of working within hospital environments.

> "I have had to be quite assertive in ensuring my opinion is heard"

My first few weeks in the role was spent visiting departments, attending clinics, multidisciplinary team meetings and trying to advertise the role as much as I could. I also had to research many and various medical conditions, procedures and treatments as I was regularly overwhelmed and completely lost in medical jargon used in these settings: this highlights an important issue for patients too, who may have the same feeling when attending appointments and perhaps don't always voice this.

I e-mailed local services and made links with other psychologists who work in a similar field and organised to visit the Centre of Appearance Research in Bristol, where much of the evidence base I work from was pioneered.

My post was helped by being embedded amongst a team of clinical psychologists providing a service to all wards and departments within the hospital. The department has been long established within the hospital, and the clinicians are well thought of and valued: this has eased the integration of my post into the different departments of the trust. It has also added an additional level of support, supervision and encouragement in the setting up and development of my post. I have had the opportunity for a broader range of experiences such as teaching trainee clinical psychologists.

I needed to develop a referral pathway which has taken some trialling and modification so it is most effective and easily accessible for staff patients. Generating referrals has sometimes been difficult. The research suggests that this may be due to the prioritising of trauma, physical recovery and functional repair in healthcare settings. Disfigurement can be deemed a 'luxury' problem (Konradsen et al., 2009). Furthermore, the enormous time constraints that are placed upon consultants and staff in the NHS can mean that the opportunity of recognising the signs of distress can be missed, particularly if patients are not aware that they can access psychological support, or are not forthcoming about how they are feeling.

One of the solutions I have found to this difficulty is having a physical presence within clinics and MDT meetings. This can

help prompt referrals but can also prove challenging in itself, given commitments and capacity. Similarly, working in a vast multidisciplinary team often means liaising with healthcare professionals who work within the medical model. I have had to be quite assertive in ensuring my opinion is heard, but equally tried hard to hear the advice and opinions of others.

The array of visible differences that referred patients have ranges from stretch marks to facial prostheses following treatment for head and neck cancer. Certainly these cases echo the current findings that severity does not predict likelihood of coping (Moss, 2005), but the variety of work has been rewarding and stimulating. Additionally this has contributed to my learning experience as many patients have physical health problems associated with their difference (e.g pain, fatigue) that can influence their ability to do day-to-day tasks, which then has a major impact on their mood.

One of the biggest challenges I have encountered has been working with patients who have been refused funding by their Clinical Commissioning Group to have certain procedures, often because they deem them to be purely cosmetic. These patients understandably attribute their distress to their visible difference and feel the only viable solution to improving their mood is to have the procedure that is being denied them. Similarly patients can have unrealistic expectations of plastic surgery and what modern-day medicine can achieve; helping staff to manage that expectation and the emotional repercussions when it has not been met has been interesting. I feel the media has a lot of answer for here in building these expectations; day in, day out we are bombarded by adverts on billboards and bus stops displaying the 'euphoria' that you too could experience if you were to undergo (risky) surgery!

I have been in post now for 12 months and I can't quite believe how quickly those months have flown by. Looking back, I have had some really interesting and amazing opportunities during this short time. I have been able to develop my clinical skills further in assessment, formulation and implementation of CBT, SIST and often drawing from acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT), an approach that has proved to be beneficial for these patients. There's a growing evidence base for the effectiveness of third-wave approaches in clinical and health psychology settings (Pull, 2009) and in particular with patients who have long-term health conditions.

I have been asked to give various presentations and teaching sessions across the hospital and also at the Centre of Appearance Research in Bristol. There has also been a large emphasis on researching this area further and evaluating the FACES package. My aim for the next few months is to continue to develop the one-to-one aspect of the role whilst also setting up support sessions and SIST workshops for patients to access. I also hope to contribute towards the evidence base of using ACT with individuals who have a visible difference.

The role has required me to work in a broad and flexible way, often being creative and employing new techniques in areas that are novel to me, such as marketing and consulting. I have also had the opportunity to provide supervision to psychology volunteers and honorary assistants ,which has been a great experience and one that I look forward to continuing throughout my career in psychology.

I feel honoured to have been given the opportunity to work in this specialist area as a Changing Faces Practitioner. I have learnt so much from my colleagues at the hospital, my fellow practitioners across the UK and the patients themselves. I am excited to see how the role will develop and I hope to be able to successfully support the implementation of other Changing Faces Practitioner roles across other NHS trusts. Watch this space...

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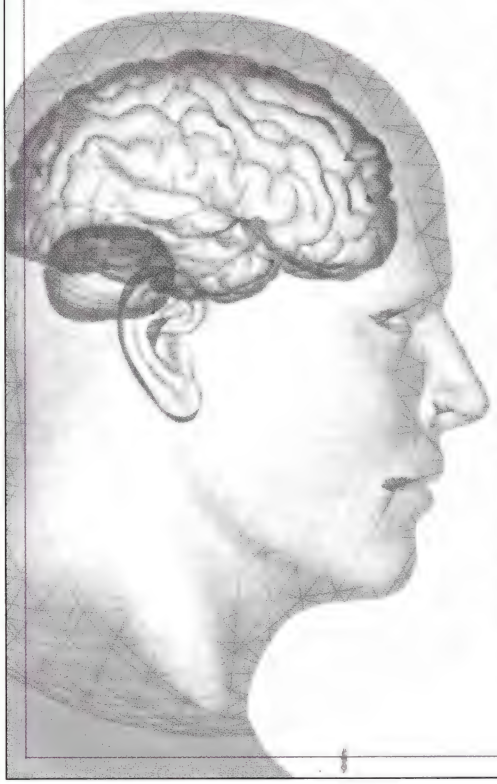

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We asked Mike Vessey at MDV Consulting what makes them different. 'We asked our clients why they work with us, and derived our three values from the answers: the combination of psychological rigour with commercial pragmatism; being flexible, easy to work with and human; and delivering on commitments made. Really it's about understanding what's at stake for the client – often that's below the waterline of the 'iceberg', and not explicit – and working damn hard to meet these expectations. For us it's this combination of factors rather than a single "silver bullet" or one big idea.'

Vessey describes MDV as a community of practitioners, saying 'many of our people work in other constellations as well as ours, but they say that the feeling of engagement exceeds what they experience elsewhere. Where we come together for research activity and learning events the whole network grows together; we have a strong collectivist values-led mindset.'

MDV think it is important to recruit a Chartered Psychologist because 'moving beyond "craft expertise" is fundamental to the work that we do, and firm solid foundations are the very basis for the first of our values.'

'Really it's about understanding what's at stake for the client – often that's below the waterline of the "iceberg", and not explicit – and working damn hard to meet these expectations'

Vessey says he is struck by how hard it is for people to get started in the profession. 'The "system" seems to be turning out more graduates than there are good job opportunities. For this reason we've just taken on three paid interns for a part-time six-month period while they complete their master's. The quantity and quality of applications we received and the effort people invested in preparing for their interview with us was humbling.'

Is it a crowded market to work in? 'I see a lot of consolidation of larger players in the market,' Vessey says, 'but also it's a large and competitive space in terms of small firms and sole traders; differentiation is key. Like many small businesses it is a challenge to manage the demands of developing business whilst delivering... one has to be able to multitask and keep lots of plates spinning.'

For those who are up for the challenge, Vessey believes it is rewarding work. 'I'm quite curious – nosey? – and so seeing inside lots of different organisations is fun and interesting. We hope to make a difference to people, their significant relationships at work, and often by extension those outside work. And I think we all continue to grow as people through the work we do and those we are fortunate enough to meet.'

A multifaceted disorder

The Time in Between is the account of a 12-year period in the life of Nancy Tucker, during which she struggled with anorexia nervosa and its sequelae. The author tells us in the foreword to her book that her aim is to convey the 'devastating damage' caused by an eating disorder. In this she succeeds, sparing no detail of the pain and disintegration, both emotional and physical, engendered by her starvation; nor of the lengths to which she goes to deceive others into believing that she is acquiescing in the many treatment programmes and diet plans which she is prescribed over the years.

Throughout her illness and even in 'recovery' she is in thrall to the 'Voice' that represents her anorexia, drawing her ever deeper into disease and away from normality. Nancy describes her progression from anxious baby to bright child – desiring perfection in herself and admiration from others – into a child at the transition to private senior school. To be the best is suddenly more difficult to achieve, but she becomes increasingly desirous of perfection in all things.

Without fully understanding why, Nancy decides that the solution to her problems is to become thin, thinner than any of her peers. Before long, the familiar tale of successful diet, support from family, and admiration from friends, has led to intensified efforts to lose weight. This is followed by an increasingly 'relentless march of rule after rule' of self-imposed restriction, turning to starvation.

The Time in Between: A Memoir of Hunger and Hope
Nancy Tucker

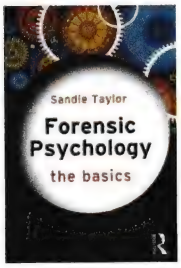
Thus far, the story is not unfamiliar to professionals with knowledge of eating disorders and those who suffer from them. However, the forensic detail with which Nancy journals the progression of the disease, with the gradual but relentless distancing of herself from friendships and family, as a result of her increasing inability to focus on anything but her internal state and her immense isolation, gives the reader a detailed and rare glimpse of what it must be to live inside the mind and body of someone with a severe eating disorder. This is not to suggest that Nancy can tell us how to help, or indeed what it was that made her 'better'.

Interestingly, one of the few helpful tools in her treatment was the suggestion that she write to her anorexia both as Friend and as Foe, a device by which she is able to verbalise some of her intolerable conflict, at least to herself, if not to others. Recovery, however, is not a sudden shift from being unwell to one of wellness. On the contrary, her personification of her disorder in the form of the 'Voice' makes it clear that living with an eating disorder can be like living with an inner alien, one who is empowered by its role as best friend in a world where the sufferer – for whatever reason – is unable to access a more trustworthy ally.

Nancy addresses the roles of therapist and family with intelligence, insight and humour. For example, she uses the medium of the a/b/c quiz question to describe the dilemmas posed when caring for a daughter with an eating disorder, and to demonstrate that whatever strategy a parent takes is bound to be mistaken. Eating disorder therapists reading this book may find it amusing to note the cynicism with which Nancy views the stream of professionals who attempt, with varying levels of competence, to dissuade her from her mission. But it is perhaps reassuring to read that 'The Right Therapist' was right not because she had the magic cure, but because she demonstrated both knowledge and compassion in the 'in between' period of the author's progress through 'an unruly collection of acceptances and realisations' on the path to wellness that she ultimately needed to follow.

More than simply a tale of suffering, this book is an illustration of the complexity of eating disorder and a reminder that the 'cure' for each sufferer may need to be as multifaceted and as personal as the disorder itself. At the end of the book Nancy informs us that she has been offered a place at Oxford University to study experimental psychology; but far from signalling a triumphant end to a painful story, she describes her growing awareness that life is more often about 'the time in between', the trials of the journey itself, and the need for acceptance both of being oneself as one is, and of an absence of control or certainty about the future.

Icon Books; 2015; Pb £12.99
Reviewed by Sara Gilbert *who is a clinical psychologist*



A helpful introduction

Forensic Psychology: The Basics
Sandie Taylor

Forensic Psychology: The Basics has the perfect title, as it is just that. It starts from the very beginning talking about the history of the topic and goes all the way to present-day research in as little as 211 pages.

There were certain things that I was hoping for in this book and it did not let me down. It gives you a simple yet in-depth look at all the key areas and people involved in forensic psychology, drawing upon real-life cases, such as that of 'Yorkshire Ripper' Peter Sutcliffe, to illustrate the points, this book is extremely well written and an highly interesting read.

I particularly enjoyed the chapter on the different perspectives, it was interesting to read about evolutionary psychology and how this related to forensic psychology as I hadn't considered these before. However, this book doesn't only talk about what forensic psychology is, but it also about what it isn't, it deals with the misconceptions and the different areas that it relates to such as crime scene investigation.

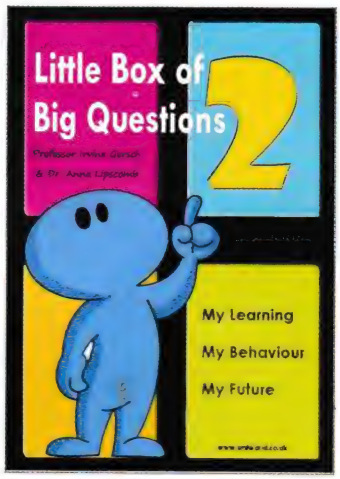
Overall, I would recommend this book both to someone who has no knowledge of the subject and someone who loves the subject; it is informative yet concise. This would be absolutely perfect for a student studying forensic psychology, like myself, as I have found this a really helpful introduction to the area.

Routledge; 2015; Pb £16.99
Reviewed by Becky Randles *who is an undergraduate psychology student at Liverpool John Moores University*

A wonderful catalyst for reflection

Little Box of Big Questions 2
I. Gersch & A. Lipscomb

Every once in a while, we receive a delightful reminder that there is more to child development than five GCSEs (level A*–C). Sometimes we receive this insight by observing the sheer joy of children in an imaginary world of their own. However, some of the best examples are likely to be found in encounters with an individual child, as was the case of the teacher, who in a maths lesson asked the question 'What should we do with the ten units that we have just borrowed?' and received the mind-expanding answer 'Let them go free!'. As the psychiatrist resident in *Fawlty Towers* observed, 'There's enough material there for an entire conference!'



In Little Box of Big Questions 2 is such a mind expander, which invites children and young people to reflect upon some of the bigger issues in life that can lie beyond the microcosm of today's classrooms. 'Big Questions' fall under the following headings:

- You are a special person (e.g. What would you like to learn in the future?)
- Meaning and purpose in life (e.g. How should we treat all people? How should we treat people with ideas different to our own?)
- Thinking and planning (e.g. What sort of person would you like to be when you are an adult?)

Like its elder sister, *Little Box of Big Questions*, the No. 2 version comes in a tin box and contains cards that are set out in an inviting format. The 'Big Questions' it contains can be used either with an individual young person, or possibly more effectively in a small group, where the intention is to discover links between the attitudes and beliefs that children have, about themselves, their peers, their home life, the school experience and their future.

There are instructions about the use of the materials, one particularly helpful one being the gentle but important statement about disclosure, where the advice provided is to inform the group or the individual that 'obviously, if anything is mentioned that leads us think that we need further help, then we will discuss this later on'. I also warmed to the concluding task, 'Think of *your* big question'. And would suggest that this request could have been even more powerful, if it had ended with the words 'and *I* will have a go at giving you *my* answer'.

In this complex and interrelated world that we share with others, providing an opportunity to articulate personal codes, considering our relationships with other people, and recognising that there is often a choice of perspective is a simple recipe for peace and harmony In other words, Big Answers to questions can reveal that two people from diverse backgrounds are likely to have just as many common beliefs, as differing ones.

In a nutshell, LBBQ 2 does provide a wonderful catalyst for reflection and for wider thinking and is likely to generate enough rich data to make thematic analysis fans feel that they were in seventh heaven!

Small World Publishing; 2015; Boxed Cards £24.99
Reviewed by Seán Cameron *who is Director, Pillars of Parenting Social Enterprise*

Dripping with experience

How to Be a Researcher: A Strategic Guide for Academic Success
Jonathan St B.T. Evans

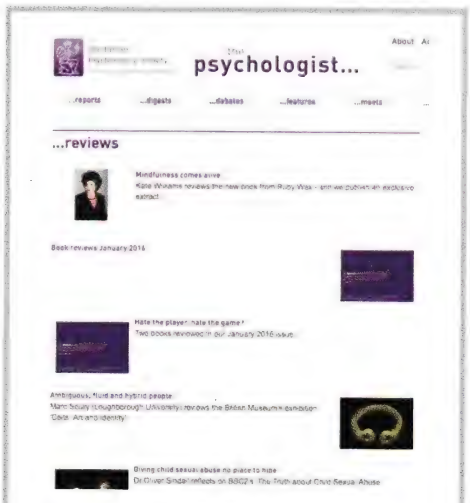
How to Be a Researcher has a misleading title: it would be better as *How to Be a Researcher in Psychology*. Indeed, it is the second edition of the author's (2005) *How to Do Research: A Psychologist's Guide* but written with a very different emphasis.

Like me, Jonathan Evans is a retired (but active) emeritus professor of psychology so, although we differ in the kinds of psychology that we do, we share many concerns and experiences. I certainly resonate to the title of this text – there seems to be little published on how to be a researcher in psychology, although there is plenty available on how to do research.

The text has one introductory chapter, and seven on topics such as the relationship between theory and practice, research and teaching, collaboration and supervision, obtaining research funding and communicating research. There are two concluding methodological chapters (i) on hypothesis testing and reasoning, and (ii) on statistical inference. Each chapter concludes with a set of 'key points', and there are two pages of 'final thoughts' about the pros and cons of life as an academic researcher.

Well organised, thoughtful and thought-provoking, I strongly recommend this text to postgraduates in psychology. It drips with experience and is bang up to date.

Routledge; 2015; Pb £19.99
Reviewed by James Hartley *who is Emeritus Professor of Psychology, Keele University*



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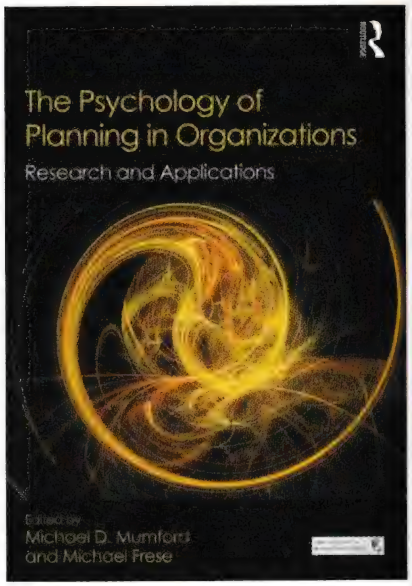
An easily overlooked but important topic

The Psychology of Planning in Organizations: Research and Applications
Michael D. Mumford & Michael Frese (Eds.)



Alongside relatively glamorous aspects of organisational behaviour such as leadership, adaptation and resilience, planning can appear rather dull by comparison. Yet, as many examples from recent and distant history show, a sound plan can make the difference between success and failure – or, at least, reduce one's reliance on luck or heroism to save the day. So, argue Mumford and Frese, occupational psychologists should understand how to foster effective planning in organisations. Hence their volume, which aims to provide an insight into planning behaviour at both managerial and individual levels.

The first thing that is likely to strike the reader is the book's impressive scope; over 17 chapters the contributors bring together various perspectives on planning. These range from the cognitive and social processes involved in planning, through the effect of 'state and trait' individual differences, to the relationship between planning and organisational performance. Each of the topics is given fairly detailed coverage by its respective chapters, and is informed by contemporary psychological insights, such as action regulation and implementation intentions. While much of the focus is on theories and research findings, the authors also draw out practical implications for organisations such as training and development strategies and aids to planning.

With such an expansive treatment of the subject matter though, there is a lot to take in and I found it a formidable read. What would have helped, I think, is a simple overarching concept of planning upon which to hang the different lines of inquiry. In addition, the key points for researchers and practitioners are not immediately apparent – they are there, but will need a bit of work on the part of the reader to pick out.

This book provides much to consider about an easily overlooked but clearly important topic in organisational behaviour. Those who are concerned with the investigation of, or interventions to improve, performance in organisations are recommended to check it out.

Routledge; 2015; Pb £37.99
Reviewed by Denham Phipps
who is a Research Fellow at the University of Manchester

just in

Sample titles just in:
The Wiley Handbook of Psychology, Technology and Society Larry D. Rosen, Nancy A. Cheever & L. Mark Carrier (Eds.)
Paradox and Passion in Psychotherapy: An Existential Approach (2nd edn) Emmy van Deurzen
Concrete Human Psychology Wolff-Michael Roth
Detox Your Ego: 7 Easy Steps to Achieving Freedom, Happiness and Success In Your Life Steven Sylvester
The Quotable Jung Collected and edited by Judith Harris
The Psychology of Radicalization and Terrorism Willem Koomen & Joop Van Der Pligt
Forensic Facial Identification: Theory and Practice of Identification From Eyewitnesses, Composites and CCTV Tim Valentine & Josh P. Davis (Eds.)
Talking Sense About Medicine: Life Lessons for Doctors and all Who Visit Them Richard Asher
Psychobiology Chris Chandler
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Sex Offenders: A Career Criminal Approach Arjan Blokland & Patrick Lussier (Eds.)
Getting Better Bite by Bite: A Survival Kit for Sufferers of Bulimia Nervosa and Binge Eating Disorders (2nd edn) Ulrike Schmidt, Janet Treasure & June Alexander
The Science of Attitudes J. Cooper et al. (Eds.)

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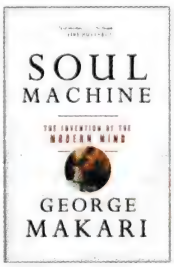
Engaging and well researched

Soul Machine: The Invention of the Modern Mind
George Makari



Living in an increasingly atheistic world where mysticism is replaced by science, it is easy to forget a time when our inner workings were attributed to divine creation. George Makari's *Soul Machine* serves as a comprehensive reminder of the pioneering ideas of early theorists.

Examining over 150 years across three centuries, Makari constructs a narrative of how the mind developed from a supernatural to a mechanical entity – from soul to machine. The works of philosophers, religious thinkers, scientists and physicians are amalgamated to create a full account of the early paradigm shift in theories of the mind. What's more, Makari achieves this by writing in an engaging and often humorous style that is extremely well researched.

A phenomenal amount of supplementary yet fascinating information is provided along with the underlying psychological and philosophical theory. What results is a textbook that reads more akin to a non-fiction story. It's possible that the extensive amount of information provided might overwhelm some readers who are less concerned with past theory. However, for anyone who is keen to research the all too often overlooked foundations of our modern concept of the mind, you would be hard-pressed to find such a detailed account as that found in *Soul Machine*.

Norton; 2016; Hb £24.99
Reviewed by Robert Davies
who is a postgraduate student at Nottingham Trent University

Mindfulness comes alive

A Mindfulness Guide for the Frazzled
Ruby Wax

With mindfulness becoming ever popular (see thepsychologist.bps.org.uk/mindful-moment), Ruby Wax's book is well timed and combines a theoretical, practical and personal account of mindfulness describing how we could all benefit from it. Ruby begins the book through describing how we have lost touch with the simplicity of life outlining a place for mindfulness today whilst citing recent evidence from neuroscience showing how mindfulness can change our brains. Ruby comments how most of us 'spend our lives hunting for something that has a very limited shelf life, sometimes lasting only seconds'. In the end, we are all searching for happiness but in the process can become miserable searching for it. Ruby describes how mindfulness practice can help us to live more in the present moment – be it a happy, sad, or dull moment.

The latter half of the book provides more practical guidance offering a six-week mindfulness course, mindful tips for developing healthier relationships and accessible mindfulness practices for children and teenagers. Mindful practices offered are short and engaging making them invaluable both for helping children understand their emotions and helping families communicate better. This is where the book really comes alive and is unlike any other mindfulness book I have encountered. Ruby's personal accounts of her own experiences with depression throughout are a wonderful and genuine addition to the book adding credibility to the mindfulness practices she talks us through. This is particularly evident during her final chapter where she bravely recounts her personal experiences of being on a mindfulness retreat.

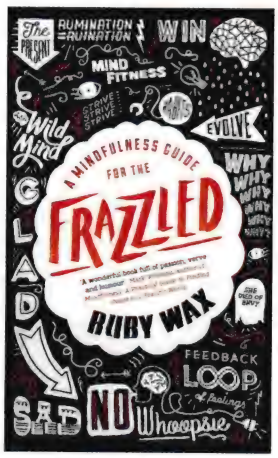
At times, the book is lacking in a specific direction and can feel like a mishmash of different mindfulness topics, but it is clear that Ruby has done her research and the topics she does present would be of interest to the novice mindfulness reader. Due to Ruby's down-to-earth writing style, the book feels accessible to those who may otherwise be put off by more spiritual-sounding or specialist language sometimes used in other mindfulness books. Providing mindfulness audio would perhaps help readers engage more with the written practices, but overall, this book is an easy, uplifting, humorous read providing a genuine introduction to mindfulness practice. What makes mindfulness so powerful is the personal touch teachers and authors offer. Ruby certainly offers this through recounting her genuine and heartfelt personal experiences of mindfulness and depression, giving the book a more personal touch from someone who knows the territory of mindfulness.

Penguin Life; 2016; Pb £14.99
Reviewed by Kate Williams
who is a research student and mindfulness teacher at the University of Manchester

EXTRACT – MINDFULNESS AND ME

For the ending of the book, Ruby visits the University of Bangor in Wales, a centre for mindfulness research, to have her brain scanned before and after a week-long retreat, with no wi-fi and seven hours of meditation a day. 'I figured that, if I'm writing this book about mindfulness, I might as well see if it delivers what it says on the label... and what better way than to use me as the guinea pig?'

Day three



'I go back to... what else? Sitting... it never ends. I start counting how many more hours are left until I can go home. I feel my mind's like a spoiled brat: it wants to eat, to sleep, to go to France, it wants the sleeting rain to stop (it's August – what's wrong with this country?) – but I'm getting more than a slight inkling about the effect this mindfulness lark might be having. From this endless exercise, I can actually feel the muscle of my attention growing from a puny little bump to something quite powerful; I'm able to keep my attention on a particular thing for a longer period than I normally could. The voices don't stop, but because I have stopped trying to stop them (or wishing that they were more profound) they're getting less vitriolic. I'm becoming less frightened that I might not be as special as I think I am. My ego is starting to do a striptease.

(Only days ago, in the brain scanner, I thought my brain was a golden orb of enlightenment.) None of us wants to look into our mind and discover that we're just simple folk and that we're no different from each other under our armour. We are all delusional if we think we're above the herd; we're all just people trying to scratch out some kind of a life. If we demand too much of ourselves, life isn't fun and we make ourselves ill, so why do that? I've always wondered why I am such a slave driver to myself? I usually can't think without pushing my mind to heights it can't reach – like a mother who pushes her child until he goes over the edge. Why can't I just leave me alone? I realize I might be so stressed in life because I'm always trying to improve myself, when it's okay just to be me, with these plain, vanilla thoughts. And as I sit there and the thoughts arise, it's as if they're rising like sediment from the bottom of a pail of clear water. Each time one disengages from the bottom, the water below gets clearer.

As I start to get off my own back, I notice that all this self-punishment for not doing enough is starting to go; I can even feel the muscles in my face moving towards a smile. I'm beginning to be able to stand back and observe my thoughts and, when I get even a trace of a negative thought or the first scent of rumination, I can re-route my focus from my head into my body, where I can sensually investigate it rather than agonize about it. I've always said that, with depression, it's impossible to know when it's coming, because you don't have a spare brain to assess whether there's something wrong, like you could with a lost finger or a lump. So I know I can't get a warning in words that it's coming, as in, 'Oh, I'm getting depression. What should I do about it?' But from all this practising, this bulking up of my insula, I know I'll be able to sense it coming. I won't feel so unaware, so helpless, next time; I understand now that the two statements 'There is sadness' and 'I am sad' are different. (It's part of me, not the whole of me.)'

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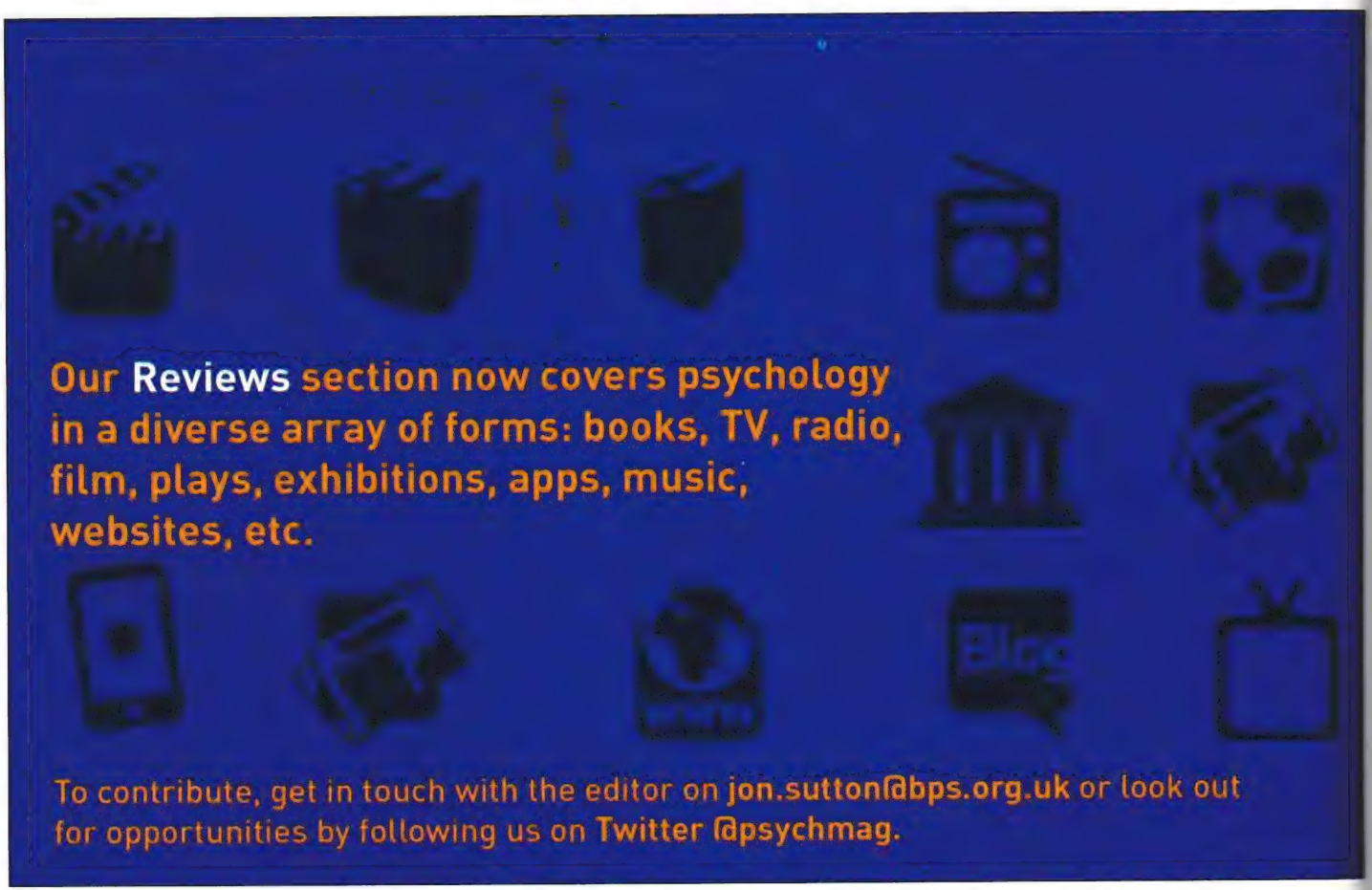

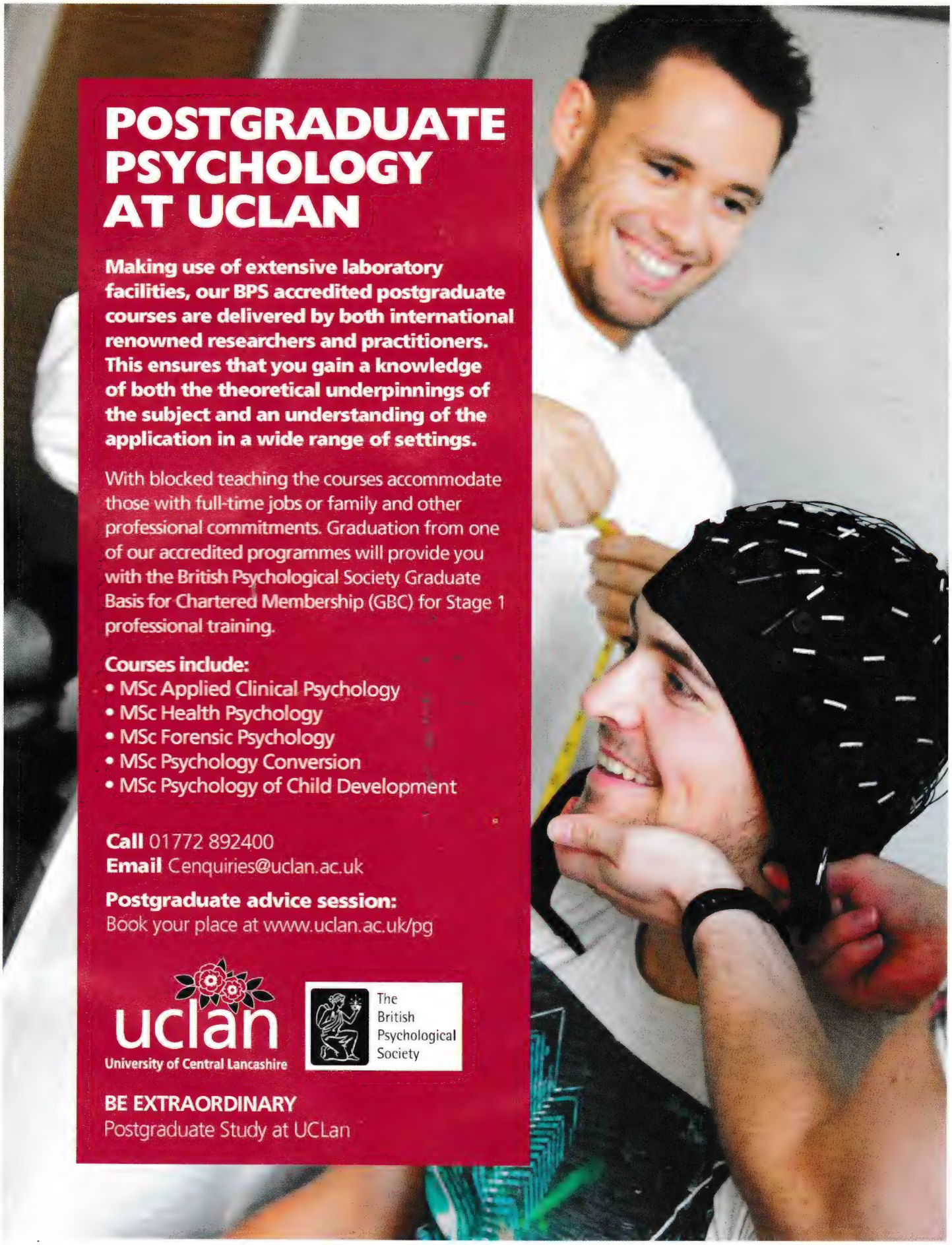

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Historical sex object – or undiscovered genius?

John Launer challenges the image of Sabina Spielrein principally as Carl Jung's mistress: was she one of the most innovative thinkers in 20th-century psychology?

Let me take you first of all on a journey of imagination. Supposing there was a young woman who was close to Freud and Jung and suggested to them a hundred years ago that the 'talking cure' should be anchored in human biology. Supposing she felt that being a woman gave her a special insight into this because she understood some of the darker side of reproduction: the fear of sexual and domestic violence, seduction and abandonment, all of which she had experienced. Imagine that she decided to move from the world of psychoanalysis to join the pioneers of child development, working with Jean Piaget, becoming his psychoanalyst, and helping him to develop some of his ideas, before moving on to Moscow and teaching the giants of Russian psychology – Alexander Luria and Lev Vygotsky. Finally, let's dream on and suppose she continued to work as a respected paediatrician, combining ideas from psychoanalysis and child development, and defending Freud publically in Russia, even after psychoanalysis had been proscribed there.

If such a person had ever existed, wouldn't you expect her to be among the best-known women in psychology in the 20th century? Wouldn't you consider it outrageous that she had been forgotten by the time of her death in the Holocaust, and rediscovered later as an erotic sideshow, because she once had an affair with her psychiatrist? Such a woman did exist. Her name was Sabina Spielrein. In this article I will give a short account of the mythical version of Spielrein's life, most recently publicised by Keira Knightley's portrayal of her in Cronenberg's movie *A Dangerous Method*. Then I will describe the different narrative I discovered when I researched her life to write my biography of her.

The mythical version begins with Spielrein's early teenage breakdown, when she ended up in hospital under the sole care of Carl Jung. He tried out psychoanalysis for the first time, using her as his test case. This was allegedly a remarkable success. She continued to see him for therapy, and this developed into a deep and lasting love affair. Freud interceded and helped them to end their affair amicably. Spielrein later became a psychoanalyst of minor distinction. After she returned to Russia, she turned into a sad and prematurely aged lady.

Every single detail of this version is untrue. It is either unsupported by the documentary evidence or directly contradicted by it. It is largely based on books written over 20 years ago, before important personal papers became available, and focusing on the two men rather than on Spielrein herself (Carotenuto, 1982; Kerr, 1993).

My own interest in Spielrein started when I first read one of her articles: 'Destruction as the Cause of Coming into Being', published in 1912. In that paper, Spielrein tried to do what many neuroscientists and some psychoanalysts are trying to do a century later: to understand the unconscious mind in terms of Darwin's vision of the two imperatives in life, to survive and to reproduce. I was so struck by the paper that I started to read everything I could about her. Here is the story that I discovered.

Spielrein was born in 1885 into in a Jewish family in southern Russia. Both her parents and two of her brothers were violent towards her. There is a strong suggestion that her father's violence was sexual. When she was 16, Spielrein's sister Emilia died suddenly from typhoid. She then suffered what we would now see as a hysterical bereavement reaction: tics, grimaces, alternate laughing and crying. Her family took her to the university mental hospital in Zurich. Its director was Eugen Bleuler, one of the first people to believe mental hospitals should be therapeutic communities. One of his assistants was Carl Jung.

Sabina began to calm down straight away. Within a few weeks, she was able to apply for medical school in Zurich. Jung encouraged her to join him in the hospital laboratory to do word association

Keira Knightley in *A Dangerous Mind*

references

Carotenuto, A. (1982). *A secret symmetry: Sabina Spielrein between Freud and Jung*. New York: Pantheon.

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tests on other patients and tried these out on Spielrein herself. Jung later claimed in a letter to Freud that he had analysed her while she was in hospital. There is little evidence for this: he saw her only intermittently, and the hospital notes do not read like an analysis at all. Several historians have also pointed out how he avoided exploring abuse in the family, while Bleuler insisted that her father and brothers should keep away from her. Subsequently, Jung wrote several further accounts of her 'case', but they are unreliable because of serious discrepancies between them.

Sabina Spielrein

While she was at medical school, Spielrein carried on assisting Jung in the laboratory. It is clear from her letters and diaries that she had a massive crush on him. He started to experiment on her by offering interpretations for her crush. She begged him to stop. The 'therapy' led to precisely the consequence she had feared. Instead of curing her of an infatuation with him, it led to him developing one with her. The affair lasted around five months. Then his emotions changed, and he confessed he had had affairs with several women before. Jung's wife then wrote an anonymous letter to Spielrein's mother, who threatened to shop him to his boss. Spielrein confronted him and assaulted him with a letter knife. Jung resigned from the hospital, and started to fire off desperate letters to Freud, calling her a liar, and then blaming her for being a ruthless seductress. Jung and Freud then entered into a conspiracy to neutralise Spielrein. Both lied flagrantly to each other, as well as to Spielrein. She forgave both of them. She resumed erotic encounters with Jung, but in the end she convinced herself that he was a 'Don Juan'. When she qualified as a doctor in early 1911 she left Zurich for good, and of her own accord.

Spielrein then embarked on a psychiatric career which included publication of around 37 papers. She married a doctor called Pavel Sheftel although the marriage was never a happy one. When the First World War broke out Pavel returned to Russia, leaving her in Switzerland with a baby daughter. It was a decade before they were reunited.

If the first half of Spielrein's life commands interest because of its personal dramas, the second half does so because of her phenomenal output. For her MD dissertation, she wrote the first extended study of schizophrenic speech and its internal logic. It was the first ever to be accepted for a doctorate using a psychoanalytic approach, and the first doctorate published in a psychoanalytic journal. It was to be another 50 years before psychiatrists like R.D. Laing showed how such speech is a vital form of communication for psychotic people. The following year, she wrote two more significant papers. One was an article on childhood fantasies about pregnancy and childbirth: the first systematic attempt to describe the imagination of children. The other was her most significant paper: 'Destruction as the Cause of Coming into Being.'

In that paper, she proposed that we are caught up as human beings in a tension between the instinct to survive as an individual, and the instinct to reproduce. She also argued that the reproductive instinct is destructive as well as creative, particularly for women, as it challenges their psychological and physical identity. She disputed Freud's idea that the pursuit of pleasure underlies all our actions, proposing that only the reproductive drive can adequately explain all our instincts. This has become a common view in modern biology and evolutionary studies. Later on, Spielrein expanded on her ideas in a letter to Jung, where she described how children seek attachment with parents in the interests of their survival and, ultimately, of reproduction. What she said was impeccable in terms of the way attachment theorists now understand how negative behaviour can contribute to survival and the prospect of descendants. There were some flaws in Spielrein's argument, but she understood that talking therapy would make no sense unless it fitted a theory that had universal acceptance in the scientific world.

Around the beginning of the First World War, Spielrein published 10 further articles. A paper on 'The Mother-in-Law' appears to be the first to take a feminist perspective on family relationships. An article she published on the treatment of a boy's phobia about monkeys is the first known report of a child being treated for an emotional problem through talking and the use of memories and associations.

In the early 1920s Spielrein joined the Rousseau Institute in Geneva, alongside the founders of child psychology. Jean Piaget joined the team shortly afterwards, and she took him on for a training analysis. She produced around 19 further papers there. These included articles making links across psychoanalysis, child development and linguistics. They include a paper on the origin of the words 'Mama' and 'Papa,' where she seems to have been the first psychoanalyst to write of the importance of the infant's relationship with the mother's breast. During this time, Spielrein was one of the pioneers of observational research into how children speak. She is likely to have been the first person to use play therapy with children.

In 1923 Spielrein returned to Russia. She joined the staff of the world's first psychoanalytic kindergarten. She influenced the young Alexander Luria and Lev Vygotsky. Later on, they both achieved fame for the ways they combined objective and subjective approaches to psychology, in the manner she introduced. Within a year or so of joining the kindergarten, Spielrein got caught in a dispute between Stalin and Trotsky about its future, and returned to her home town of Rostov. Her husband Pavel was in a relationship with another woman, and they had recently had a baby daughter – although Pavel returned to live with Sabina and Renata. A year after Sabina's return, she and Pavel had a second daughter.

Spielrein next worked in the new field of pedology – a synthesis of medical paediatrics, child psychology and developmental studies. She created her own adaptation of psychoanalytic methods to address the circumstances of the Soviet Union. She continued with observational research of children into the late 1920s. She spoke about this publicly in 1929, when psychoanalysis had virtually been banned by Stalin. She continued to work until shortly before the German invasion.

In June 1942 Spielrein and her two daughters Renata and Eva were murdered by a Nazi death squad, along with almost the entire Jewish population of the city. Her terrible death makes it even more important to rediscover her legacy, and replace the fictionalised version of her as a sex object with the story of a woman of genius.

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... with Susan Hallam

'Music has so many other benefits'

One youthful experience
I was brought up in Leicestershire at a time when the Director of Education, Stewart Mason, was committed to all children having opportunities to engage with the arts. Aged seven I began to learn the violin and was soon persuaded to join a junior orchestra. From this I progressed to the Leicestershire Senior Schools Orchestra which I led from the age 15. We toured abroad, made recordings, and worked with many famous composers and conductors, including Sir Michael Tippett on a TV programme called *Overture with Beginners*. As leader of the orchestra at the time I was interviewed and my comment that working with Michael Tippett was 'terrific' led to much ribbing at school. These experiences not only had musical benefits but opened my eyes to all kinds of career opportunities. I developed a range of personal and social skills which have supported me in my academic career and influenced me to research the wider benefits of music.

One favourite film
Farewell My Concubine. This film spans 53 years in China presenting the lives of two men against the historical backdrop of a country in upheaval. It is a dramatic film which had an emotional and intellectual impact the first time I saw it.

One academic influence
My undergraduate studies in psychology were completed through London University's external examination system supported by the National Extension College. There was no formal tuition so I spent a lot of time in libraries doing my own research. On completion of my degree I registered for a part-time MSc in the Psychology of Education at the Institute of Education. My tutor there was Dr Fitz Taylor. I was interested in learning and performance and it was through his teaching that I was introduced to a whole new literature which has continued to be influential in my work. Fitz suggested that I should register for a PhD, something I would never have considered without his support.

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One retreat
I can completely lose myself in a book. I'm particularly partial to a good detective story and at one time thought I might try writing one.

One turning point in my life
On leaving the Royal Academy of Music I became principal second violin in the BBC Midland Orchestra, where my interest in psychology developed. Becoming more committed to psychology, I decided that I should move into education, gained a teaching qualification and began to teach the violin. This culminated in me becoming Head of Strings for Oxfordshire Education Authority. During the 1980s the music service in Oxfordshire came under threat, prompting me to move into teaching psychology, initially and briefly (only two terms), in a college of further education. What changed my life was being appointed to my first higher education lecturing post at the Institute of Education in 1991.

One media experience
In 1996 I was approached by the BBC TV programme *Tomorrow's World* to advise them on creating an experiment to test the 'Mozart effect' (listening to 10 minutes of Mozart will increase your IQ). I advised them that doing an experiment live on TV would be risky, and we agreed that 10- and 11-year-old primary-school children would listen to 10 minutes of either Mozart (on Radio 3), Blur (Radio 1) or me talking about experiments (Radio 5) on the day prior to the programme. The children would then complete two spatial reasoning tests which the teachers would mark. The results would be couriered to me and I would report the findings live on the programme the following day. While participation of about 300 children was planned, extensive media coverage asking for participants resulted in over 200 schools and 8000 children taking part. Not surprisingly there was no Mozart effect!

One holiday destination
I love walking and The Alps provide the perfect environment – views to die for and fresh unpolluted air.

One conference
In 1998 myself and a colleague, Richard Cowan, presenting findings related to homework at the conference of the BPS Education Section in Exeter. This marked the beginning of extensive and controversial coverage in the media, David Blunkett being extremely exercised by the findings of the review.

One pressing concern
In the current age of austerity and with schools increasingly focusing on improving their results in terms of government criteria, I am hugely concerned that music education will disappear from the curriculum. Only one in three primary school children now take part in music activities compared with half in 2010 and with the introduction of the EBacc music is under threat in secondary schools. Apart from the value of music in its own right, it also has so many other benefits in terms of children and young people's intellectual, personal and social development – its loss would be catastrophic.

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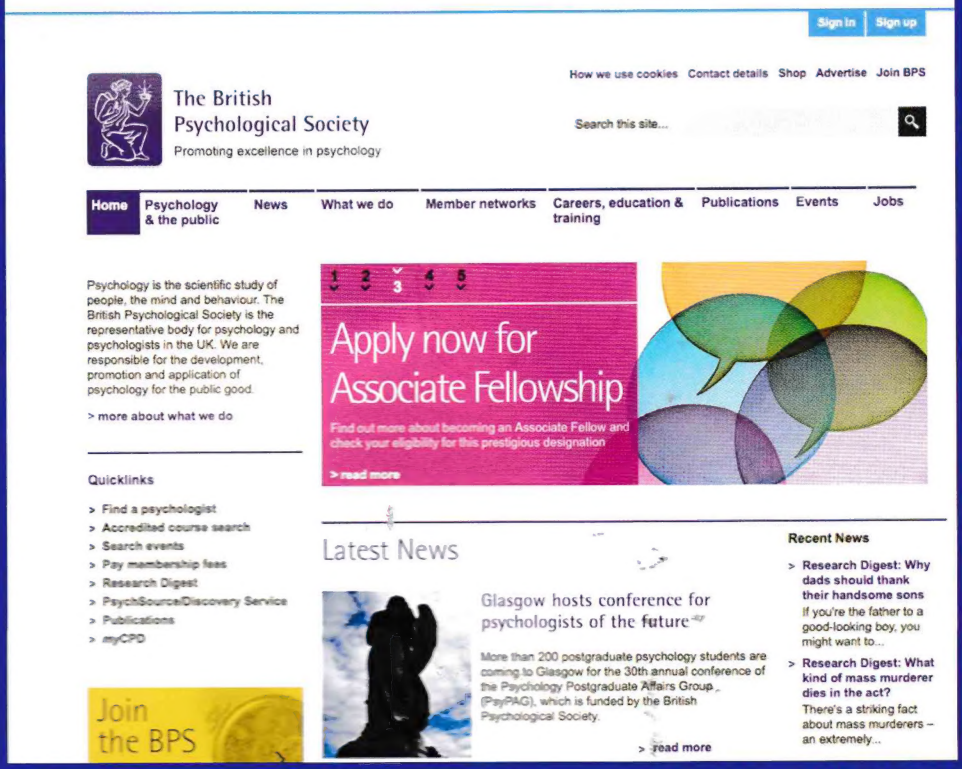

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Contact

Helen Clark, Director of Membership Services

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Psychology Research Day, London, 2 March 2016 See p.92
BPS Annual Conference, Nottingham, 26–28 April 2016 See p.i
BPS conferences and events See p.119
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Presidents' Award See p.138

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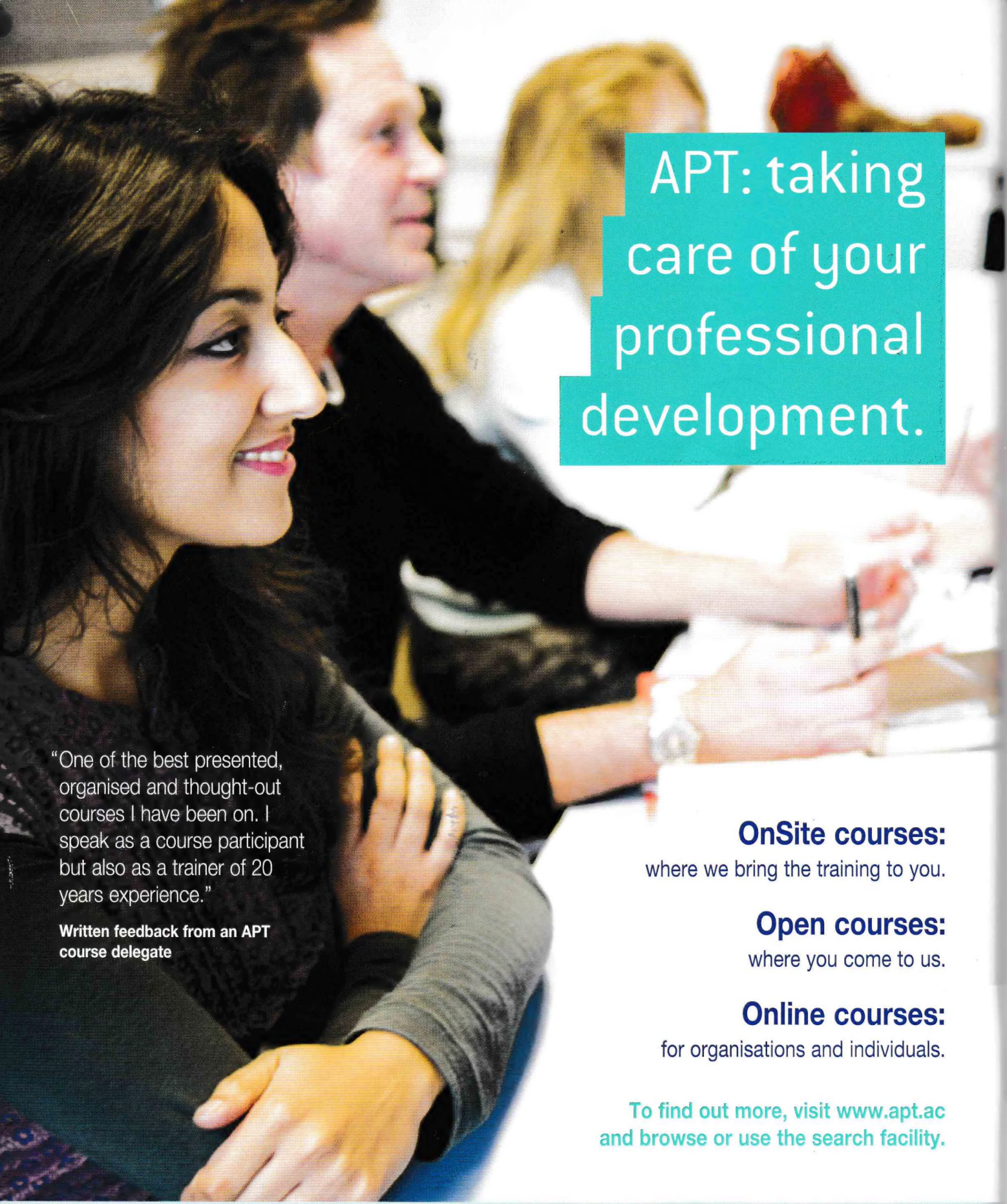
Extract from The Charter



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